

# Holliston localtownpages

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## From Grief to Giving: Thrift Store Honors Mother & Helps Others

By JESS OMMEN

A Holliston thrift store gives new meaning to paying it forward by raising money for cancer research while offering residents an affordable, sustainable shopping option and a space for building community spirit and hope.

My Mother My Friend, is a non-profit, woman-owned retail thrift store offering clothing, jewelry, knickknacks, glassware and more. All proceeds support cancer research through the American Cancer Society Research Fund, a cause that is near and dear to shop owner Kathy Murphy McKenna, who lost her



Kathy Murphy McKenna, who lost her mother to pancreatic cancer in 1989, created the thrift shop, My Mother My Friend, to honor her mother's memory. The nonprofit raises funds for the American Cancer Society Research Fund. Photos by Jess Ommen.

**THRIFT**

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## Holliston's DECA District Award Winners Head to States

By JUDITH DORATO O'GARA

Holliston High School's DECA (Distributive Education Clubs of America) chapter performed exceptionally well at the recent DECA District Conference in Mansfield on

January 8th and 9th, with 39 out of 115 participating students earning awards and qualifying for the Massachusetts

**DECA**

*continued on page 3*



Shown are five Holliston High School DECA students who received first-place at the DECA District Conference in Mansfield on January 8th. From left, Dhyani Gajjar, Michael Cao, Ibrahim Nayer, Steven Lima, Rishita Mitra. Thirty-nine of Holliston's 115 participants will move onto the Massachusetts State Career Development Conference (SCDC) this March in Boston.



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**THRIFT**

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mother to pancreatic cancer in 1989.

“I wanted to do something to dedicate the rest of my life to my mom. So, this thrift store is kind of the brainchild,” McKenna explains.

McKenna is a Holliston resident of 25 years and serves on the Board of Directors for the Holliston Lions Club. This year, she was honored as a recipient of the Select Board’s 2026 Humanitarian Awards, for her compassion and dedication to the Holliston community.

Fellow Lions member and Selectman, Damon Dimick, presented the award, “Tonight, I am honoring someone who shows us what it looks like to take one of life’s hardest experiences and turn it into something generous and kind and giving.”

“All of us experience loss at some point. And we carry that differently. Some of us compartmentalize it; some of us hold it quietly and rebuild slowly; and a few, a very very few, manage to take that pain and love and memory and channel it outward towards helping other people. Kathy McKenna is one of these rare people,” Damon explained.

McKenna said she wanted the store to honor her mother, Joyce Alice Murphy, but it has since turned into so much more – it has turned into a way to honor the community.

“Many people say it’s for others, but it’s changed my heart, too,” McKenna says. “And my mom, I’m sure, knows about it.”

McKenna chose to open a thrift shop because she loves thrifting and knew some people would want to donate belongings of loved ones who may have also been lost to cancer, something that has held true since she opened her doors in October.

“People tell me the stories, like ‘Oh this used to be my mom’s, and I think someone else would love that,’” says McKenna, “They tell me that many times, it is items from loved ones who have also succumbed to cancer. So, it is this incredible intimate little shop that I think brings comfort to those that drop things off.”



The local shop has become a place where shoppers and donors share memories of their loved ones.

The shop is a safe place where you can share your story of survival or loss and honor it in a meaningful way. Inside the shop, McKenna has a “Wall of Heroes” dedicated to cancer survivors and anyone currently undergoing treatment. She also

invites the public to share their memories of deceased loved ones on the “Wall of Fame” where her own mother’s name is inscribed at the center.

During the Humanitarian Awards Ceremony on December 8th, Dimick recognized that



My Mother My Friend is “more than a store, more than a non-profit that raises funds for the American Cancer Society. It’s a living expression of resilience and the kind of signal that tells us how we can take profound grief and turn it into something that helps the world light up just a little bit more.” He said it is a place where “kindness is the true currency.”

My Mother My Friend is located at 358 Woodland Street in Holliston. Business hours are 11 a.m.-4 p.m., Wednesday-Saturday.

Donations of clothing, small items and knick-knacks are accepted throughout the week during business hours or can be dropped off in the recycling bin located on the rocking chair in front of the shop. Large items, furniture, pillows, and toys are not accepted at this time. Monetary donations are also accepted during business hours. Cash, Venmo, credit card, and Apple Pay are accepted.

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**DECA**

*continued from page 1*

State Career Development Conference (SCDC) this March in Boston. The team's success spanned the entire spectrum of the business world, with students competing against 16 other cities and towns and earning top honors across all four DECA pillars:

- **Marketing:** Crafting strategic brand narratives.
- **Finance:** Demonstrating elite financial literacy and accounting skills.
- **Hospitality & Tourism:** Excelling in management and service excellence.
- **Entrepreneurship:** Pitching innovative solutions for the modern economy.

"To see our students excel across such a diverse range of categories is a testament to their versatility," said Bob Tivnan, DECA Advisor. "The fact that over a third of our team qualified for States—led by 11 first-place champions—speaks volumes about the hard work they've put in since the start of the year."

Holliston High School junior and Chapter Vice-President Rishida Mitra is one of those first-place winners. She and Chapter President Steven Lima secured first-place finishes in the most rigorous path to qualification, the Comprehensive Written Paper, which requires extensive time and research. Mitra conducted fundraising, social media outreach, website design and some administrative work for the Neshlyn Children's Foundation. Her written paper ranked first in the district competition's Business Solutions category.

Mitra, who joined DECA as a freshman, explains the club has helped her develop professional skills, helping her answer such questions as, "How do you want to present yourself externally outside of school ... how do you express your thoughts professionally, (come) up with a presentation or (think) on the spot," she explains.

Mark Freeman, DECA advisor, explains students "not only did a lot of studying on their own, but they also participated in a mock competition, in which local business leaders



"DECA is a club that brings you so much closer to both your peers as well as several of the adults who monitor the competitions," says student participant Rishida Mitra.

and retirees in the community participated as judges."

Freeman is impressed with the support DECA students give each other.

"When you look at some high school organizations, you end up with a lot of kids that are the same, because they have the same interests. You get a lot more diversity in personalities across this sort of competition, and they're all getting along and supporting each other from every different group in the high school," he says.

Mitra, who hopes to be one of the top six from states this year to qualify for the international competition, says students get ideas from giving and receiving feedback as they mock role-play. She also values the guidance she has gotten from club advisors and professional adults who monitor the competition, describing the networking opportunities as "beyond."

"DECA is a club that brings you so much closer to both your peers as well as several of the adults who monitor the competitions. I've had judges at district and state levels that have provided so much helpful feedback I can use," she says.

"It can be challenging for these kids to be talking to adults," says Freeman. The experience, he says, will equip the students with a lifelong ability to network and think on their feet.

"These skills help them no matter if they're going to become a plumber, electrician, doctor or attorney," says Freeman, "No matter what their career is, the skills they learn in

this organization carry forward for them."

Freeman is impressed with the support DECA students give each other. He's optimistic at their prospects.

"They cheer each other on," he says, "When you look at some high school organizations, you end up with a lot of kids that are the same, because they have the same interests. You get a lot more diversity in personalities across this sort of competition, and they're all getting along and supporting each other from every different group in the high school."

Among the 39 qualifiers heading to Boston in March, those who place at the state level will earn a spot at the International Career

Development Conference (ICDC) in Atlanta, Georgia April 25-29.



Sanika Javali and Xuanye Zhang are among students gaining valuable business skills in Holliston High School's DECA program.

HHS DECA students' next challenge will be to raise funds to head to the state competition, and, hopefully, the international competition.

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# See a Bobcat? Take a Pic, but Keep Your Distance

BY GRAYDON WEBB

According to several reports around social media, it seems there may be some unnerving visitors in the area: bobcats! While it may seem like a creature such as this would be out of place in your town, wildlife experts say bobcats can be seen all across Massachusetts. In fact, they're the only wild cat species still present in the state! In order to stay safe this winter, we wanted to give you some quick tips that could keep you - and especially your pets - out of a bobcat's way!

First of all, you should be able to identify a bobcat in your area! According to Mass.Gov, bobcats "can be easily identified by [their] short, "bobbed" tail (up to 12 inches)." Their coats vary in shades of brown with

black spots, and their adult size can be anywhere from 28-47 inches in length. The website also states, "male bobcats are approximately 33% larger than their female counterparts," so size can certainly vary!

Bobcats are probably more common around this time as we are nearing their mating period. From February to March, the cats tend to mate and pretty soon, they'll produce offspring in April or May. Bobcats make their habitats in rocky crevasses and hollow trees, looking for damp, dark areas to make their home and females may use the same den sites for several years in a row.

So, what can you do to stay safe during this time? Fortunately, bobcats don't tend to pose much harm to humans,



**This trail cam caught Broadmoor Sanctuary's first confirmed bobcat sighting in over 15 years, although locally, folks have been posting their own pics on social media.** Photo used courtesy of Jonathan Davis, Mass Audubon Society.

or even domesticated pets. These cats prefer smaller prey like rabbits, possums, and the occasional bird. That being said, bobcats do have a history of attacking livestock, so it is advised by Mass.Gov to "avoid pasturing animals or placing coops in remote areas or in areas near heavily wooded cover." As long as pens have the right protection - such as thick wire fencing - they should be just fine.

Bobcats can be active at any time of day, but they're most often seen around dusk and dawn. Their tracks look quite similar to domestic cats, which can make it harder to determine if they're in the area or not. They're also great climbers, with an excellent sense of smell, sight, and hearing. Thankfully, according to the MSPCA, "they are shy and solitary animals," and if you lock up your trash

properly and keep a good eye on your pets when they go outside, chances are you'll never have a bad encounter with a bobcat.

But still, it can be a bit of a shock to see them in the area. So, how can you help out the community if a bobcat does cross your path? Well, sharing pictures to social media does help to raise awareness. You can also contact your local animal control office, so they know of bobcats in the area. This can help them track its movement as well!

We spoke with a representative from Mass Audubon Northeast, Jonathan Davis, and he informed us that "bobcats have big territories and will cover as much as four miles in a single day." Outside factors like habitat loss and even automobile collisions have actually made bobcat

appearances more rare in the area, and Davis says "they really require a large amount of conservation land to thrive," which also affects their movement patterns.

As previously stated, bobcats rarely cause any harm to humans and are, in fact, quite skittish. Humane World for Animals tells us that, should a bobcat cross your path, "be big and scary: Raise your arms over your head, yell or blow a whistle." Make a lot of noise as you move toward them slowly, and this will scare them off. Of course, this action should only occur if you encounter the animal in the wild, like on a walk, for example. When dealing with bobcats in general, Jonathan Davis reminds us, "give wildlife space if you encounter one, and don't approach."

We hope these tips and factoids will help calm your nerves about bobcat sightings in the area. Remember, as long as you keep an eye on your pets, dispose of trash properly, and secure livestock as best as you can, these wild cats will remain nothing but tracks in the snow!

If you're interested in more information on bobcats, you can find some resources from Mass Audubon at <https://www.massaudubon.org/nature-wildlife/mammals-in-massachusetts/bobcats>.

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# Is There a Housing Bubble? A Local Perspective



Lynne Ritucci and Tim Swift

## REAL ESTATE INSIGHTS

It's a question heard often, at the grocery store, on the sidelines of a soccer game, or over coffee with friends: "Is the Metrowest in a housing bubble?"

With home prices still higher than many remember, interest rates changing, and plenty of headlines predicting one thing or another, it's a fair question.

The short answer? Today's housing market looks very different from the bubble of the past.

When people think of a housing bubble, they're often remembering the mid-2000s, when prices rose quickly, lending standards were loose, and many buyers were able to purchase homes they ultimately couldn't

afford. When the market shifted, it caused widespread instability.

That's not what is happening today.

Most homeowners now have strong equity, and buyers are going through much stricter financial qualification. Inventory, the number of homes available for sale, remains historically low, especially in desirable communities like ours. Simply put, there are more people who want to live here than there are homes available, which continues to support home values.

Does that mean prices will rise forever? Of course not. Real estate markets naturally adjust and move through cycles. What we're seeing now is more of a normalizing market, one where buyers are thoughtful, sellers need to price accurately, and homes that are well-prepared and well-marketed still attract strong interest.

Locally, homes that are priced correctly and reflect today's market conditions are continuing to sell. Those that miss the mark tend to sit longer, not

because the market is collapsing, but because buyers have become more selective.

For homeowners, this is reassuring. The vast majority are not overleveraged, and many have built substantial long-term value in their homes. For buyers, while affordability is a challenge, the market is far more stable than it was during a true "bubble" period.

So, is there a housing bubble? All signs point to no. What the market is experiencing is a market that's finding its balance, influenced by interest rates, local supply and demand, and individual property appeal.

As always, real estate is local. National headlines don't always reflect what's happening on our own streets and neighborhoods. Whether you're thinking about buying, selling, or simply staying

informed, understanding the local market is far more important than reacting to big-picture predictions.

And if nothing else, it's always okay to ask the question, because informed homeowners make confident decisions.

Lynne and Tim are proud Holliston residents and a trusted Real Estate Team, always happy to help with any Real Estate needs. For additional information or questions, please contact Lynne or Tim.

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## MSO Issues Scam Warning Involving Fake Judicial Documents

Woburn, MA – The Middlesex Sheriff's Office (MSO) is issuing a warning for residents regarding scams involving fake judicial documents, "Preemptive Bail" and digital currency.

In recent days, the MSO has received numerous notifications from area residents reporting calls from criminals posing as law enforcement members. In each case, the callers alleged residents had warrants for their arrest for failing to appear in court.

In at least three of those instances, residents were sent what appeared to be arrest warrants via text. The warrants – which are fake – indicated charges were for failure to appear and contempt of court.

In all the instances – including those involving the fake warrants – scammers tried to convince residents to pay fines of up to \$5,000.

In one case involving a fake federal warrant, the scammer also sent the resident a docu-

ment indicating they could post a "Preemptive Bail", which would allow them to "avert apprehension and secure timely release." The document also indicated that bail involving cash deposits "can be made at locally available kiosks, such as those found at grocery stores and fuel stations."

Another document indicated that the "White House Administration has approved Digital Currency as a method for posting eligible appearance bonds" and included directions on how to pay at an "Authorized Self Service Bonding Terminal".

"We want to be clear: no legitimate court or law enforcement agency will ever carry out its responsibilities this way," said Middlesex Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian. "There is no such thing as preemptive bail, we will never ask you to pay a fine at a gas station or grocery store, and the courts do not accept digital currency. These are all tell-tale signs of a scam."

If you, or someone you know, has been targeted in one of these arrest scams, you are encouraged to contact local law enforcement or the agency that the alleged warrant is from to report the incident. In cases where callers claim to be from the Middlesex Sheriff's Office, we ask that you call either (781) 960-2800 or (978) 667-1711 and ask to speak with an investigator in the Inner Perimeter Security (IPS) Unit.

The Middlesex Sheriff's Office is also offering scam awareness and prevention presentations for local organizations within Middlesex County. Since the beginning of November, the MSO has delivered scam awareness presentations in five communities. Organizations interested in hosting a presentation may submit a request on the MSO website at [www.middlesexsheriff.org/31/Community](http://www.middlesexsheriff.org/31/Community).

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# Completion of New England Clean Energy Connect Transmission Line Announced at State House

Boston, MA - After years of careful planning, legislating, and implementation, the completion of the New England Clean Energy Connect (NECEC) transmission line has happened and is now delivering affordable, stable hydropower from Canada to Massachusetts

The long-awaited New England Clean Energy Connect is a 145-mile high-voltage transmission line that carries power generated by hydroelectric facilities in Quebec to the Commonwealth. With a capacity of 1,200 megawatts, the line can transmit

enough power to satisfy about 20% of Massachusetts' total electricity needs. And thanks to a 20-year fixed price contract with the state's electric utilities, it's projected to save ratepayers \$50 million a year.

The fixed prices in the contracts provide power and clean energy attributes at prices well below the projected costs of buying the same amount on the market, and lock in those prices for the next 20 years.

"Bringing Canadian hydropower into Massachusetts is a major milestone that strengthens



our energy reliability, advances our clean energy goals, and—most importantly—delivers a robust new source of power to consumers at a reasonable and predictable price," said State Representative Jeffrey N. Roy, former Chair of the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities & Energy (D-10th Norfolk). "This long-anticipated moment is the culmination of nearly a decade of careful planning, legislating, and implementation, carried forward despite significant legal, political, and logistical obstacles. I had the opportunity to see the source of this power firsthand when I visited the St. James Bay hydropower facilities—an engineering marvel—in Quebec last March, and it is deeply gratifying to see that work come to fruition."

In addition to lowering electricity prices, this clean, sustainable hydropower will help meet rising electricity demand, provide needed energy reliability in the winter, and reduce harmful pollution in Massachusetts and the region. During cold temperature periods, New England relies on higher-priced, more carbon-intensive fuels. This leads to expen-

sive and volatile winter energy pricing and regional reliability concerns. The NECEC project will help address these challenges by providing consistent clean energy production during cold temperatures.

"Today, power is flowing to Massachusetts through the New England Clean Energy Connect transmission line," said Governor Healey. "My administration worked closely with the Legislature, the Attorney General, and private partners to ensure the project moved forward and delivered savings. The NECEC line represents our all-of-the-above approach in action – working with regional partners to bring affordable energy into the state that will lower costs and meet our growing demand. We are proud to flip the switch on this line and bring costs down, and we are continuing to work to bring more energy into Massachusetts."

Several Hydro-Québec teams dedicated their efforts and expertise to designing and building this strategic 100-km infrastructure across Québec. On the US side, their partner constructed a 230-km transmission line in Maine. Among the project's highlights

are the creation of a new family of towers that blend more seamlessly into the landscape, a crossing of over one kilometer at the former Asbestos mine in Thetford-Mines and the integration of four of the largest transformers in Hydro-Québec's power system.

"This is an historic day; the New England Clean Energy Connect is now delivering enough renewable energy to power a million homes," said Hydro-Québec Energy Services U.S. COO Serge Abergel. "We are proud to be your partners. We have all overcome many obstacles to get to today. Now we are not just talking; we are delivering. This is a shining example of our regional partnership, which will continue for the next 20 years and beyond."

In 2018, following a competitive solicitation, the Massachusetts electric distribution companies negotiated and executed contracts with the NECEC project. Following authorization from the Massachusetts Legislature in 2023, the Healey-Driscoll Administration, the Attorney General's Office, Eversource, National Grid, and Unitil negotiated with NECEC to ensure these contracts remain beneficial for Massachusetts ratepayers. The joint settlement agreement was later approved by the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities, helping pave the way for the project to finish construction. Under the contracts, NECEC will import 9.55 terawatt-hours annually of 100 percent hydroelectricity from Quebec to the New England electric grid.

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# Local Business Owners: Don't Overlook Retirement Plans



Mark Freeman, CEPA

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If you're a local business owner, you're juggling many priorities: growing revenue, managing expenses, supporting your team and planning for your own future. What if one tool could help with all these goals?

A workplace retirement plan might be that solution and can, directly or indirectly, offer benefits that extend beyond simple savings.

**Double the tax advantages.** Starting a retirement plan can deliver immediate tax advantages. For the business, employer contributions are tax-deductible. And as a participant in your company plan, your pretax salary deferrals are excluded from income taxes; your investments within the plan are tax-deferred until distributed. Many plans now offer Roth options that allow tax-free withdrawals in retirement.

Local businesses may also qualify for federal tax credits that help offset startup costs, employee education expenses and plan administration fees. Additional credits may be available for auto-enrollment features and employer contributions made during the plan's first five years.

**A competitive edge in hiring.** In today's labor market, offering a retirement plan can differentiate your business from competitors and help improve employee retention.

Many plans also provide access to financial education tools and resources, helping your employees make informed decisions about saving, investing and planning for retirement. This support can lead to greater employee satisfaction and productivity, contributing to a positive work environment for your business.

**More flexible than state-sponsored options.** If you live in a state requiring an employee retirement program, you might be considering a state-sponsored plan. While these programs can provide a starting point, they typically offer fewer investment options, lower contribution limits and limited design flexibility.

Establishing your own workplace retirement plan lets you customize features for your business needs to control administrative costs, set contribution limits and offer employees a wide range of investment options. This added control in plan design can lead to better outcomes for your business and your employees.

**Reducing a hidden risk in your own retirement planning.** Business owners often have as much as 80% of their net worth tied up in their businesses, according to the Exit Planning Institute. While that demonstrates commitment to success, it also creates significant financial risk to the owner.

Relying solely on a future business sale to fund your retirement can be precarious. Market shifts, timing challenges or limited buyer interest could derail those plans. By building personal assets through your employer-sponsored retirement plan, you can gain financial flexibility and reduce the risk of having your retirement lifestyle depend entirely on one event.

**Getting started.** With various retirement plan options available, determining which one fits your business best can feel overwhelming.

A qualified financial advisor can help you navigate these decisions, explaining the trade-offs

between different plan types and identifying which option best suits your unique situation. They can also help you understand eligibility requirements and ensure the plan you choose aligns with your business goals and personal financial objectives.

Starting a workplace retirement plan represents an investment in your future, your employees and the long-term success of your business.

Contact Mark today to discuss this topic or any of your financial goals.

Mark Freeman, CEPA  
Edward Jones Financial Advisor  
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# A Love-ly History

By NATALEE WEBB-RUBINO

Valentine's Day was not always a joyful celebration. It originated from the beheading of a Priest named Valentine in A.D. 270.

Valentine secretly married couples against a ban enacted by Roman Emperor Claudius II. The emperor believed men were not joining his army because of their duty to their wives and families. Claudius banned marriages and engagements to solve his infantry enlistment problem.

During the carnal "Feast of Lupercalia," on February 14th in A.D. 270, Claudius had Valentine executed by decapitation. During his incarceration Valentine became friends with his jailor's daughter. Before his guillotine walk, he left a farewell note for her. The letter was signed "from your Valentine."

Another morbid February 14th is Chicago's St. Valentine's Day Massacre in 1929. Gang leader Al Capone sent four of his Associates to make a hit on

his rival, Bugs Moran. Dressed in police uniforms, the thugs entered the Lincoln Park garage, lined up 7 of Moran's gang members against a wall, and then shot them with machine guns. In all, 70 rounds of ammunition were pummeled into Moran's hoodlums immediately killing 6. The lone survivor would not testify against Capone.

Following Emperor Claudius's execution of the Priest Valentine, the Christian Church proclaimed him a Saint. As "St. Valentine" he became the patron Saint of lovers, people with epilepsy, and beekeepers.

In A.D.496, then Pope Gelasius put an end to the pagan "Feast of Lupercalia" by declaring February 14th to be "St. Valentine's Day." Instead of pagan rituals, gifts of love messages, poems and flowers were exchanged.

The first mailing of a handwritten "Valentine Card" was posted in 1806. In 1913, Hallmark Cards of Kansas City, MO., began producing "Valen-

tines DAY Cards." Now simply known as Hallmark, they remain the leader in Valentines Day card sales.

Boston has a unique symbolism for Valentine's Day, the "bridge of locks." Have you ever wondered why the fence on the bridge at the Hynes Convention T stop has so many padlocks on it? The locks attached to the Bridge's fencing are "love locks," a globally recognized symbol of love whose tradition began in Paris. Some of the locks adorning the fence are professionally engraved while others simply have their "who-loves-who" written with a thick magic marker.

In a survey by WalletHub in 2025 of 100 of the largest cities in America, Boston ranked #14. With its quaint charm, amazing waterfront views, and romantic restaurants, Boston is the perfect place for romance on this now "amorous" Valentines Day.

Celebrate the day with joyful hearts!

# Town of Holliston

## Nomination Papers Available

On February 2, 2026, Nomination Papers will be available to run for an elected office in Holliston. Running for a Town Office can be a rewarding experience, and an opportunity to help your community. Holliston depends on its volunteers.

The following is a list of the offices:

Select Board	3 year term	1 position
Board of Assessors	3 year term	1 position
School Committee	3 year term	2 positions
Board of Health	3 year term	1 position
Trustee of Public Library	3 year term	2 positions
Finance Committee	3 year term	2 positions
Park Commissioner	3 year term	1 positions
Planning Board	5 year term	1 position
Housing Authority	5 year term	1 position

To qualify as a candidate, you must be at least 18 years old, a registered Holliston voter, and collect 50 signatures from Holliston registered voters by March 31, 2026. The Town Election is May 19, 2026.

If you would like to discuss the possibilities, or have your Nomination Papers Prepared, please call or stop by during business hours M, W, TH 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., T 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m., F 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Town Elections are non-partisan.

Town Clerk's Office, (508) 429-0601.

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Town Clerk

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# Model Twice, Execute Once: Roth Conversion Analysis Done Right

**Glenn Brown, CFP**

One of the most underutilized and often misunderstood strategies in retirement and tax planning is the Roth IRA, particularly Roth conversions. Evolving tax laws, funding options, and legacy planning have made understanding how and when to use this strategy more important than ever.

A Roth IRA provides tax-free growth and distributions with no lifetime RMDs, unlike Traditional IRAs that require taxable withdrawals regardless of need. Despite these benefits, many high earners say, “I make too much money to do a Roth.” While this may limit direct contributions, especially outside workplace retirement plans, it does not eliminate the ability to build Roth assets through other planning strategies.

**Contribution vs. Conversion**

A Roth conversion moves assets from a Traditional IRA into

a Roth IRA, triggering income tax on pre-tax contributions and earnings in the year of conversion. Once converted, those assets grow and can be distributed tax-free, providing long-term flexibility. This is where Roth conversions become a form of tax-rate arbitrage: paying taxes today at known rates to avoid higher or uncertain taxes in retirement.

**Understanding the Pro-Rata Rule**

When converting, the IRS looks at all Traditional, SEP and SIMPLE IRAs combined to determine the taxable portion. You cannot cherry-pick only after-tax contributions; the taxable amount is proportional to the ratio of pre-tax to after-tax funds across all balances. Ignoring this rule can lead to unexpected tax consequences.

**Model Twice, Execute Once**

Effective Roth conversions are rarely last-minute decisions. Early in the year, potential conversions should be modeled to estimate taxable income, marginal brackets, and downstream effects such as Medicare premiums or state taxes. Establishing guardrails early provides a framework for decision-making.

Execution should wait until later in the year, after income, bonuses, capital gains, and deductions are clearer. Re-running the model allows adjustment of conversion amount, or skipping a year, to reduce the risk of over-paying taxes.

**Use Market Downturns to Your Advantage**

Market declines can improve the tax efficiency of Roth conversions. If stocks or ETFs fall significantly, converting at lower values reduces the taxable amount while allowing future growth to occur tax-free. If this situation doesn't occur, conversions must still be completed by December 31. Spreading conversions over multiple years can help manage marginal tax rates and plan for cash flow to pay taxes with non-retirement assets.

**Today's Tax Rates Will Change**

It's dangerous to assume federal or state taxes will remain fixed. Even “permanent” laws can change with new Congressional majorities or administrations. Rising deficits, shifting fiscal priorities, and evolving state policies make future tax rates, deductions, and exemptions uncertain. Roth conversions create income

insulated from these changes, offering greater tax diversification, flexibility and certainty in retirement planning.

**Legacy Benefits Always Overlooked**

Many analyses of Roth conversions stop at the death of the second spouse, overlooking benefits for children and grandchildren. Inherited Roth IRA distributions are tax-free, unlike inherited Traditional IRAs, where withdrawals are taxed at the beneficiary's income rate.

If the original owner was taking RMDs from a Traditional IRA, those taxable withdrawals continue under the SECURE Act's 10-year rule. With an inherited Roth, heirs face the same 10-year rule but no annual RMDs, allowing assets to compound tax-free and be withdrawn at the end of the period without generating taxable income or increasing the Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) of mid-career beneficiaries.

**Take Ownership**

By modeling conversions early, executing with updated knowledge, and taking advantage of market dips, you can reduce future tax uncertainty and preserve flexibility. Consult your Certified Financial Planner to see how Roth IRAs and Roth conversions fit into your holistic financial plan.

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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# Holliston Pantry Shelf Continues to Feed the Community, One Neighbor at a Time

By JENNIFER RUSSO

For more than three decades, the Holliston Pantry Shelf has quietly played a vital role in the town's safety net, ensuring that no neighbor has to face hunger alone. As economic pressures continue to affect families across Massachusetts, the Pantry's work in 2026 remains as essential as ever.

Founded in 1993 by Sylvia Stickney, Theresa Meadows Sharpe, Nancy Norris, and Bobby Blair, the Holliston Pantry Shelf is a volunteer-run, non-profit organization guided by a simple mission: Neighbors Helping Neighbors. The Pantry provides Holliston residents with free access to groceries and basic household items in a welcoming, grocery-store-style environment designed to preserve dignity and choice.

What started as a small project located in the basement of Town Hall, grew over time -

moving over to a building on Water St. across from the Mills. Then, as the need for the services they provided grew, it expanded again and in 2018 the Pantry began its move to the current location at 73 Charles St.

The Pantry offers a wide selection of food, including fresh produce, dairy, eggs, frozen meats, and shelf-stable staples such as pasta, cereal, canned vegetables, and soup. Personal care items like soap, shampoo, toothpaste, and paper goods are also available. The Pantry also has a wonderful partnership with Dignity Matters, which donates women's self-care products on a quarterly basis.

One of the Pantry's distinguishing features is that residents are not required to disclose financial information. Families can complete an application online in nine languages - with the only requirements being that they are Holliston residents and

confirm their census information is up to date with Town Hall. They can then obtain a Pantry card. For those with an immediate need for food, a temporary card can be given on the spot at the Town Hall with a completed application and census. If you need assistance, you can go to <https://shopper-application-84dae.web.app/> or



scan the QR Code here.

In 2025, the Holliston Pantry Shelf served over 270 households by distributing over 21,350 bags of food to seniors on fixed

incomes, families navigating job changes or medical challenges, and residents navigating rising costs.

In response to the November Government shutdown and the withholding of SNAP benefits, the Holliston Pantry Shelf responded by joining forces with The Center and Holliston Youth and Family Services (HYFS) to give out food bags called "SNAP Sacks" - which included fixings for a meal in each bag. 176 community members signed up to assemble these to drop off at the Pantry. Anyone in need could simply drive up in front of the Pantry and get a couple of bags of food handed to them, no questions asked. Across 6 distribution nights in November, there were 676 bags of food distributed.

"We know that life is constantly changing, and we are ready to flex when impactful events happen," shared Pantry President Karen Jewett. "For



example, during COVID-19, we pivoted in one day to a 100% delivery model to ensure that people could have the food they needed. We responded to the SNAP crisis with the same intent. People who were not going to receive their SNAP funding in time would need food support."

The Pantry operates entirely through community donations and the dedication of well over 100 volunteers. Financial contributions allow the Pantry to purchase food, and those donations help ensure that the shelves remain stocked year-round.

"We are beyond grateful for food donations and food drives

**PANTRY**

*continued on page 11*

## Ask the Assessor

By KEVIN RUDDEN, PRINCIPAL ASSESSOR

**Questions:** The property tax bills I received in early January say "Third Quarter" and "Fourth Quarter," but January through June are the first and second quarters of the year. Why are my tax bills wrong? And, why are these two bills different than previous ones?

**Answer:** The dates on your bills are not wrong. State and local governments in Massachusetts operate on a fiscal (monetary) year running from July 1st through June 30th. (Just to confuse things further, the federal government operates on an October 1st to September 30th fiscal year.)

Here's how the calendar year and the fiscal year compare:

The two quarterly bills you received in early January are different than your previous bills.

Calendar Year 2026	Fiscal Year 2026
Q1 = January 1 – March 31, 2026	Q1 = July 1 – September 30, 2025
Q2 = April 1 – June 30, 2026	Q2 = October 1 – December 31, 2025
Q3 = July 1 – September 30, 2026	Q3 = January 1 – March 31, 2026
Q4 = October 1 – December 31, 2026	Q4 = April 1 – June 30, 2026

Here's why: Because the total valuation of property in the town and other financial information usually is not available until the Fall, the first two quarterly tax bills of the fiscal year (covering July through December) are estimated based on the average of your previous four quarters' payments. We call these first two quarterly bills "preliminary" bills.

For example, a single-family house in town was assessed at

\$607,700 and its owners paid \$9,014.38 in property taxes in Fiscal Year 2025. Divide that total by four and you get \$2,253.60 per quarter. This is the amount these owners were billed for the first quarter and again for the second quarter of Fiscal Year 2026.

By the October-November timeframe, final values for the new fiscal year are completed, and a new tax rate is set. For Fiscal Year 2026, the house

in question is now assessed at \$610,800 and the tax rate is \$14.29 per thousand dollars of valuation.

The Fiscal Year 2026 tax bill, including the 1.5% Community Preservation surcharge, is \$8,837.82. Subtract from this amount the \$4,507.20 the owners paid for the first two quarters, and they now owe \$4,330.62 for the remaining six months of the fiscal year. This balance is divided by two, with

\$2,165.31 due on February 2nd and \$2,165.31 due on May 1st.

By the way, to calculate the 1.5% Community Preservation surcharge, subtract \$100,000 from the value of your property. In the example we've been using, the assessed value is now \$510,800. Multiply this number by the tax rate (0.0149) and you get \$7,299.33. Multiply that number by 0.015 and you get \$109.49 for the Community Preservation charges.

**PANTRY**

*continued from page 10*

over the past year as they help stock our shelves. Financial donations are also greatly appreciated and provide more purchasing power. The Pantry is part of the Greater Boston Food Bank, which allows our money to go further by buying items the Pantry needs most at better prices than we can find in grocery stores,” Karen shares. The Pantry also presented options of purchasing a week of milk and/or bread as a new way to contribute in 2025. This was met with an unbelievable outpouring of support and some fun online neighborhood challenges resulting in milk and bread for the Pantry being paid for through July 2026 to date.

Community support also shines through in the Pantry’s flagship fundraising event, their “SOUPer” bowl fundraiser, which will be held this year on February 6th from 5-8 p.m. at St. Mary’s Church Function Hall - 8 Church Street in Holliston.

Held each winter, the “SOUPer” bowl brings residents together to enjoy soups donated by local places (2026 donors include Bazels, Casey’s, Holliston Lions Club, Outpost Farm, Prezo, Primavera, and the Superette), all while raising critical funds for Pantry operations. This year, there will also be ice cream from TC Scoops and Whoopie Pies donated by Cozy Crumb Kitchen along with many delicious desserts donated by local families.

“Part of the fun with this event is seeing the community come together with their families, friends, and neighbors. Each year there is a bountiful raffle table filled with some awesome baskets, donated by many of our amazing small businesses in town. This year there is an incredible Red Sox ticket and pregame tour basket donated by an HHS Grad and former Pantry student board member” says Jewett. This event has sold out for the past two years. Tickets can be purchased by scanning this QR code while they last!

As food insecurity remains a pressing issue even in small

towns, the Holliston Pantry Shelf stands as a powerful example of what sustained local action can achieve. Through volunteerism and donations, the organization continues to ensure that help is always close to home.

The store is open five days a week with varying daytime and evening hours, providing consistent access to food for those who need it. Learn more by visiting [www.hollistonpantryshelf.org](http://www.hollistonpantryshelf.org) or emailing [info@hollistonpantryshelf.org](mailto:info@hollistonpantryshelf.org).



# Holliston Police Remind Dog Owners to Renew Licenses

The Holliston Police Department is reminding residents to get your dog registration(s) in sooner than later as they are due by April 30th or you may incur a \$50 fine.

For more information and / or to register, use the QR code in the image or view the Town website here: <https://www.townofholliston.us/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=28>.









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# Holliston Select Board & School Committee Meet to Discuss Invitation to MSBA's Eligibility Period

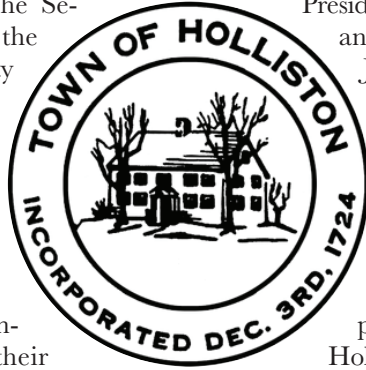
During their regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, December 22nd, the Holliston Select Board held a joint meeting with the Holliston School Committee to discuss next steps regarding a high school building project with the Massachusetts School Building Authority ("MSBA").

In the coming months, both boards will work collaboratively to ensure the Town meets the requirements needed to complete Module 1 of the MSBA's eligi-

bility period. These include the formation of a School Building Committee by the Select Board and the need for feasibility study funding to be appropriated by Town Meeting in calendar year 2026.

Both the Select Board and the School Committee extend their sincere gratitude for the

continued support of Holliston's legislative delegation -Senate President Karen Spilka and Representative James Arena-DeRosa. In addition, both boards look forward to engaging with the community about this important project for Holliston's future.



# Holliston Hosted "ICE Out For Good" Protest

By JESS OMMEN

On Saturday, January 10, 2026, community members from across the Metrowest area gathered at Holliston Town Hall to protest Immigration Customs Enforcement activity in light of a Minneapolis incident that left a U.S. citizen, and mother, dead.

The protest was part of a statewide effort addressing concerns about federal immigration policies and tactics.

People of all ages participated, holding signs and calmly sharing their messages in support of immigrant rights, freedom, and the constitution. The protest remained nonviolent, focusing on unity and compassion rather than disruption. Participants emphasized the importance of fairness, dignity, and humane policies for all individuals, regardless of immigration status.

The event aimed to raise awareness and encourage open discussion within the community. By focusing on peaceful expression and mutual respect, the Holliston protest reflected a broader movement across Massachusetts, where small towns and cities alike held similar vigils and rallies to advocate for humane reforms and community support.



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# Student Involvement Up, Parent Involvement Down with HDAAC

By JUDITH DORATO O’GARA

On Thursday, January 8th, the Holliston Drug & Alcohol Awareness Coalition (www.hdaac.org) held its annual planning retreat for key stakeholders at Anthony’s on the Green in Holliston. “We had 27 participants which was super great,” says HDAAC Coordinator Zoe Moreau.

Two pillars, she explains, are defined for HDAAC through the CDC’s Drug-Free Community Grant (DFC). First is collaboration with community and second is to ultimately reduce youth substance use. Both are achieved, Moreau believes, by “partnering and supporting your whole community.”

Moreau says when she began her position 2 ½ years ago, a few months after HDAAC first received the DFC grant. Although HDAAC had been in existence since 2015, she did not find a lot of recognition when she attended events. Nowadays, she says, “at least half the room is now raising their hand. It’s a big recognition, that ‘we know you exist.’ There may not be a huge amount of people who have used our services, but it’s a big win under the community investment piece.”

As for reducing youth substance use, Moreau says that, on average, youth substance use among Holliston residents is trending down, and Holliston sees a lower-than-average rate of use than other towns.

“We track that biannually,” says Moreau, noting the statistics come from the MetroWest Foundation’s Adolescent Health Survey, most recently conducted this past November. Those results won’t be available for a couple months, she says.

“Holliston students are always doing better than the average MetroWest town,” she says.



# HDAAC

The Holliston Drug & Alcohol Awareness Coalition

That’s not to say there is no substance use.

“Across the board, alcohol is always the highest substance use (among youth), especially with high school students. Something special in Holliston, we’re suburban, but we have rural areas, parties in barns, things like that. We’re really tackling parent responsibility in high party times of year such as graduation and summer.”

On the positive side, says Moreau, “I think vaping is very low. Time and again, I hear, especially from middle school students, they’re really proud to be health-conscious students. They don’t want to see vapes in their school.” She attributes this to students wanting to make their parents proud.

Student engagement with HDAAC is also on the rise, says Moreau. The Youth Action Team at Holliston High School currently has 42 students, with a large share being sophomores. Moreau, in fact, has taken some of those students to Beacon Hill, and one, in fact, now serves on a statewide leadership board. Moreau will also be taking nine of those students to Capitol Hill to advocate for their peers.

“There’s always room for more education,” says Moreau, adding, “All of the people sitting in big tobacco, big cannabis, big alcohol, all are making billions of dollars, and they spend so much money marketing to your kids. They’re not resting. Our existence is to try to combat all of the effort they’re putting in to try to hurt you and be that shield.”

While student involvement is up, however, HDAAC has had a tough time getting parents involved. “Our challenge is always getting parents involved, both on the Coalition itself and coming out to events,” she says. HDAAC has promoted community events to only have a handful of parents show up, so now, she says, the organization will “to try to meet people where they’re at. We try to show up at events at the school and implement any quick education we can. Instead of hosting our own one-hour trainings, we show up for five minutes.”

HDAAC also works to reduce stigma in its educational outreach.



HDAAC’s Zoe Moreau engages community stakeholders last month at the annual stakeholders’ retreat at Anthony’s on the Green. Photo used courtesy of HDAAC.

“A big thing we like to talk about is erasing stigma. It’s not anyone’s fault for picking up these substances. They are so incredibly marketed to young people; we should not be mad at people in general if they are struggling with substances. We should be working with them and showing lots of compas-

sion,” says Moreau. Moving forward, she hopes to raise HDAAC’s engagement with students in middle school and their parents, because, she says, “They really are the perfect age to start talking to them about (substance use).”

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## Low-Maintenance Beauty Is the New Luxury

Luxury used to mean more. More steps, more products, more time in front of the mirror. But lately, something has shifted. Today's most sought-after beauty trend isn't about excess. It's about ease. Low-maintenance beauty has officially become the new luxury, and it's one busy woman are happily embracing.

Low-maintenance beauty is about creating a fuss-free baseline that works effortlessly for you, a look that falls into place each morning. A great haircut that grows out beautifully. Hair color that looks polished weeks later. Skin that glows without layers of makeup. These aren't shortcuts—they're smart investments. When your routine becomes as simple as a quick hair fluff, face wash, moisturizer, and five-minute makeup, you suddenly have an extra 45 minutes in your day for what truly makes you feel beautiful: family moments, a good book, a workout, or whatever brings you balance.

The shift is everywhere: skincare focused on barrier repair and hydration rather than aggressive routines, makeup designed to enhance rather than mask, haircuts and color that allow more grace between appointments. Even wigs and toppers are being embraced in mainstream beauty for convenience and confidence. The goal isn't to do less because beauty doesn't matter—it's to do less because life is full, and beauty

should support it, not complicate it.

Ready to get your time back? Here are our favorite low-maintenance services and products that make it happen.

### Power of 3 Facial

**The Power of 3 Facial** combines dermaplaning, extractions, and a customized peel to transform your skin in one appointment. By eliminating facial hair and creating a smooth canvas, your skincare products absorb better and makeup glides on flawlessly, giving you a more even, polished look that lasts throughout the month. This treatment helps new skin rise to the surface without harsh chemicals, excessive downtime, or pain. Using a specialized surgical blade, the top layer of dry, dead skin cells and fine vellus hair (peach fuzz) are carefully removed, freeing your face of debris. A light steam, T-Zone extractions, a customized brightening peel, and a soothing mask complete this anti-aging game-changer. The result? Smoother, more radiant skin, better product absorption and easier makeup application.

**Product Recommendation: GM. COLLIN PEEL TONER EXFOLIANT** - Gently eliminate dead skin cells and reveal a radiant, even complexion with this daily leave-on liquid exfoliant. Sweeps away dead skin cells and impurities, regulates excess sebum, smooths skin texture, reveals a

brighter, more even complexion, and tightens the appearance of pores while hydrating and softening the skin.

### Low-Maintenance Hair Color

Low-maintenance hair color is all about creating beautiful results that grow out gracefully, giving you more time between salon visits. These techniques use softer color placement to eliminate harsh regrowth lines and keep your look fresh for months.

### Lived-In Color Techniques

Balayage, root smudging, and shadow roots create a natural, sun-kissed look that can extend 10-12 weeks between appointments instead of the typical 6-8 weeks. Root smudging and shadow roots involve applying a darker tone at the base to create a seamless transition and softer grow-out. Between full services, a color balance appointment refreshes your color by blending retouched roots from mid-length to ends, adding shine and moisture without requiring a complete highlight or balayage.

**Grey-Blending** Grey-blending is a game-changer for embracing natural silver while maintaining depth and softness. Instead of covering grey completely, this technique uses strategically placed highlights and lowlights to blend grey hair with your natural or desired tone. The multi-tonal result creates a forgiving grow-out that eliminates harsh root lines and gives you months between



45 Minutes Back, Every Day

touch-ups while keeping your hair looking dimensional and refined.

**Product Recommendation: Kerasilk Hydrating Essence Brightening Shampoo** - This lightweight, rinse-out treatment delivers instant, deep hydration while locking in shine for a healthy, polished finish.

### Soft Layers and Styles That Hold Their Shape

Modern haircuts emphasize soft, textured layers that create natural movement and volume without requiring extensive styling. These cuts are designed to air-dry beautifully or need just a quick blow-dry to fall into place. Styles like long layers, textured bobs, and shaggy cuts work with your hair's natural texture rather than against it, reducing your reliance on flat irons, curling wands, and round brushes. The key is precision cutting that considers your hair's growth pattern, density, and natural wave, creating a shape that looks intentional and polished as it grows.

**Product Recommendation: Goldwell Air Dry BB Cream** - The Goldwell StyleSign Smooth Air-Dry BB Cream is a nourishing hair cream that helps to combat frizz while providing the hair with light hold and a soft shine, no matter what texture your hair is! This styling cream is ideal for air-drying your style, but can also be used for blow-drying to help

you create a stunning blow-out every time.

### Professional Beauty Products Extend the Life of Your Service

The right beauty products can double the life of your salon and spa services. For hair, color-safe sulfate-free shampoos preserve vibrancy and prevent fading, while dry shampoo extends blowouts by absorbing oil and refreshing volume between washes. Heat protectants shield hair from styling damage, and leave-in treatments maintain moisture and shine. For skincare, professional-grade cleansers, serums, and moisturizers work deeper than drugstore options to maintain the clarity and glow you get from treatments like the Power of 3 Facial. Daily SPF is essential for protecting your skin investment and preventing sun damage. Strategic product use means fewer salon visits, less heat styling, healthier hair, and skin that stays glowing longer.

Your stylist or esthetician can recommend professional products tailored to your specific needs, maximizing every service and keeping you looking your best.

Beauty that works as hard as you do? That's our goal. **Now go enjoy those extra 45 minutes!**

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# Holliston Newcomers & Neighbors

## 2026 Grant Application Now Open

Holliston Newcomers & Neighbors (HNN) has long been committed to giving back to our community. Throughout the year, HNN organizes fundraising events which contribute to the HNN Community Investment Grant Fund. The 2025 fundraisers that contributed to the HNN Community Grant Fund for 2025 were the Prize-A-Day Calendar Raffle, Touch-A-Truck, The Great Pumpkin Trail Walk and the Comedy Night.

The HNN Community Grant is open to Holliston organizations and town departments for specific projects or items. We will consider only those grant applications that are completed in full and will prioritize funding for those grant proposals that best fit the criteria established by the HNN Community Investment Committee. Specifically, supporting groups that do not have significant income from fundraising and whose grant application demonstrates that the project would:

1. Have a significant impact on the community
2. Provide needed services/projects to the community at large
3. Impact a large number of Holliston residents

Please note, grant proposals that seek to redistribute funds or that seeks funds strictly for operating costs will not be considered. All educational requests must be submitted through the designated school administrator, and no individual educator requests will be reviewed.

Also, please indicate whether or not it will be possible to complete the project within the next calendar year if your request is only partially funded. Applicants are also asked to share what they see as the loss to the community if HNN does not fund their grant. All applicants will be notified of committee's decision in April 2026.

The 2026 grant application is available on the Holliston Newcomers & Neighbors website <https://www.hollistonnewcomers.org/page-18102>. The deadline for requests is February 24, 2026. Requests received after

the deadline will not be considered.

Applications can be emailed to [HNNCommunityInvestments@gmail.com](mailto:HNNCommunityInvestments@gmail.com) or received at the address noted below.  
Community Investments Committee  
Holliston Newcomers & Neighbors  
P.O. Box 6581  
Holliston, MA 01746

If you have any questions, please email the HNN Community Investments Committee - [HNNCommunityInvestments@gmail.com](mailto:HNNCommunityInvestments@gmail.com)

# Metrowest Interfaith Community Events

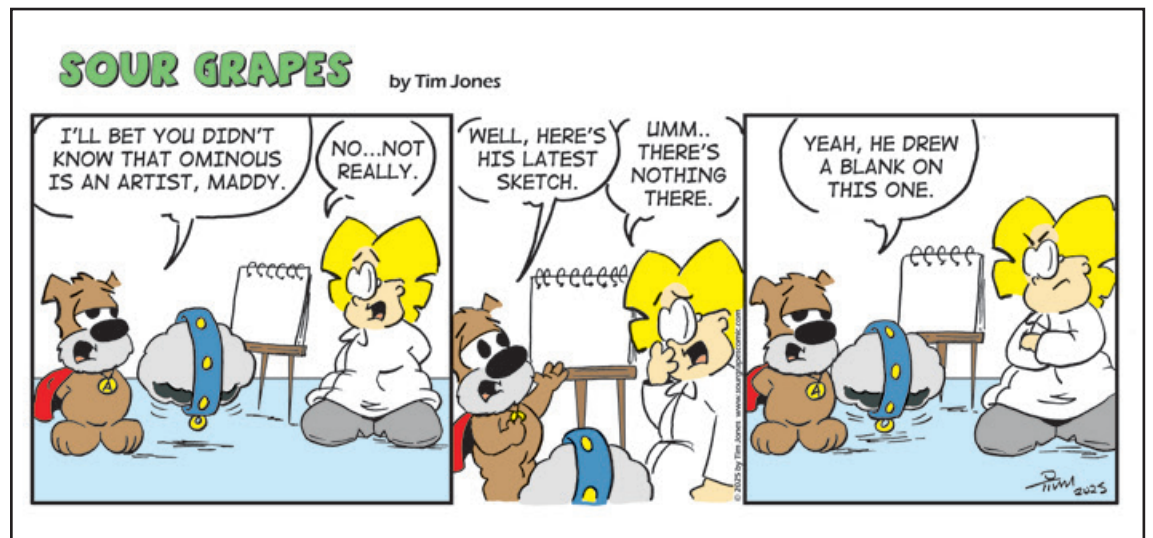
## Interfaith Devotions & Prayer

Every Tuesday morning at 9 a.m.

<https://bit.ly/interfaithtuesday>  
[francespolitt@gmail.com](mailto:francespolitt@gmail.com)

Every third Saturday at 9 a.m.

<https://bit.ly/saturdayinterfaith>  
Contact Gina Fox at [gsafire@comcast.net](mailto:gsafire@comcast.net)



## Interfaith Pickleball

Date/Time: TBD; RSVP interest!  
Location: Bosse, 310 Speen St, Natick, MA

Welcome to the Center for Interfaith Collaboration's first event of 2026! For our faith communities to collaborate authentically and in good faith, we first have to develop relationships of trust, humor, and effective communication across difference. What better way to do that than pickleball? When we play together, we learn to see the world through each other's eyes.

To sign up, visit: <https://tinyurl.com/CICInterfaithPickleball>

To learn more about the Metrowest Interfaith Community, visit <https://www.hollistoninterfaith.org> or find them on Facebook.



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# “Think Spring and Easter” with Holliston Newcomers & Neighbors

Holliston Newcomers & Neighbors is once again helping the Holliston Pantry Shelf with Easter Gifts! Donations for \$25 Gift Cards for children 0-17 years old are being accepted through March 16th so that we can provide the cards to the families before Easter.

You can donate online at <https://hollistonnewcomers.org/Donate> and select Easter Baskets, or you can mail a check to Holliston Newcomers & Neighbors, PO Box 6581, Holliston and indicate Easter Gift on the check. If you have any questions, please email [committee.newcomers@gmail.com](mailto:committee.newcomers@gmail.com).



You can be a part of putting a smile on the faces of so many deserving kids in our community. Holliston Newcomers & Neighbors thanks you in advance for your support!



Holliston Newcomers & Neighbors - Building Friendships, Building Community

# Diverse Holliston Choir Plans Concert at Library March 7th



The Diverse Holliston Choir is planning a concert on March 7, 2026, at Holliston Public Library, at 12:30 p.m. The “International Women’s Day Concert” will include favorites such as “Respect,” “I’m Every Woman,” “I will Survive,” and more.

The choir rehearses Tuesdays, 5:30-6:15 p.m. at 24 Water Street Mill, Studio 3-4, with a break the week of February 18th.

If you are interested in joining, reach out to [sarastalnakergmail.com](mailto:sarastalnakergmail.com) or text or leave a voicemail at (774) 231-0401.

The Holliston Pride celebration, Hollipride, is also being planned for Sunday, June 14, 2026, from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. at Blair Square. The event will include live music and dance, a pup parade, vendors, storytelling, arts and crafts, and a beauty parlor. Visit [www.hollipride.org](http://www.hollipride.org) or email [hollistonpride@gmail.com](mailto:hollistonpride@gmail.com) for more information.

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# Struggling With Acne?

By LISA MASSIMIANO,  
LICENSED ESTHETICIAN AND  
CERTIFIED ACNE SPECIALIST

If you have been diagnosed with acne and haven't been satisfied with drug store products or the suggested treatment from your doctor, consider seeing an Acne Specialist.

### What is an Acne Specialist?

An Acne Specialist is a licensed skin care professional who is specially trained to treat acne using a combination of clinical treatments, home care protocols and regular follow-up during the process of clearing acne prone skin.

Most physicians don't have the time to spend educating patients on the root cause of their acne. They often prescribe oral

antibiotics and strong topical retinoids that can leave skin dry, red and irritated. Patients get frustrated with these side effects and stop using the products.

### How an Acne Specialist Can Help You.

An Acne Specialist will assess your individual skin type, and the type of acne you have, to develop a plan of action specifically for you. They will take the time to teach you about the root cause of acne and provide information on lifestyle, diet, medications, and ingredients in makeup and skin care products that exacerbate acne. They help you to get your skin clear and teach you how to keep your acne under control.

For people struggling with acne, it can be frustrating to try

and communicate with their doctor on a timely basis. My clients tell me that the best part of working with an Acne Specialist is that we are there for them to answer their questions and provide support while they go through the process of getting their skin clear.

Questions about acne? Email Lisa Massimiano, owner Skin Smart Salon and Acne Clinic at [skinsmartsalon@aol.com](mailto:skinsmartsalon@aol.com) or call (508) 881-1180. Visit the website [skinsmartsalon.com](http://skinsmartsalon.com) for information about Skin Smart's acne program and other services.

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# World-Class Eye Surgery Closer to Home:

## Why the Cataract Surgery Center of Milford Is Special

By: ROGER M. KALDAWY, M.D.

For patients facing cataract surgery, choosing where to have the procedure can feel overwhelming. Many assume the best care requires traveling to a major academic hospital in Boston. In reality, some of the most advanced, safest, and most patient-centered cataract surgery in Massachusetts is happening right here at the Cataract Surgery Center of Milford, operated by Milford Franklin Eye Center.

Milford Franklin Eye Center has served the community for more than four decades, earning a reputation for comprehensive care grounded in continuity, accessibility, and physician involvement. Unlike practices that rely on rotating or visiting surgeons, the ophthalmologists here most of them live and they all work in the community, provide emergency coverage, and care for patients before, during, and after surgery. That continuity is a key

reason patients trust them.

A major distinction of the Cataract Surgery Center of Milford is that surgery is performed in a fully licensed, Medicare-certified, and QUAD A-accredited ambulatory surgery center—not a standard office. This distinction has important safety and financial benefits.

Office-based cataract surgery often requires patients to pay out-of-pocket office use fees. This is because many insurance companies decline coverage for office-based surgery because of safety concerns for surgeries performed outside accredited centers. At the Cataract Surgery Center of Milford, this is not a concern: these charges are covered by insurance. The center meets strict standards for sterility, anesthesia, staffing, infection control, and emergency preparedness—comparable to hospitals—ensuring patient safety and avoiding unexpected costs.

Patients are encouraged to



ask questions when referred for cataract surgery. They should ask their optometrists whether the ophthalmologist performs surgery in an accredited center or an office, and whether any commercial relationships may influence the referral. Transparency helps patients make informed decisions about safety and cost.

The center is also a regional leader in innovation. It was

among the first in Massachusetts to adopt laser-assisted cataract surgery and advanced premium intraocular lenses, helping many patients reduce or eliminate dependence on glasses. More recently, it became the first in the state to implant the Clareon Pan-Optix Pro trifocal lens, a next-generation implant providing sharp vision at near, intermediate, and distance ranges.

The center also leads in glaucoma care as well. It was the first in the region to offer Direct Selective Laser Trabeculoplasty (DSLT), which delivers laser energy without touching the eye, making treatment faster, more comfortable, and precise while maintaining a strong safety profile. With this laser, patients often reduce or eliminate daily eye drops. The center was also the first in New England to use iDose TR, an advanced treatment that delivers sustained-release medication for cataract patients, a milestone covered in a Channel 5 news story.

The center was also the first to install the Unity Cataract System, a fully integrated surgical platform that combines imaging, fluidics, and phacoemulsification in one system. This allows surgeons greater control, consistency, and efficiency, improving safety and outcomes.

The center remains deeply patient-centered. Cataract surgery is typically performed using topical anesthesia—eye drops rather than injections—combined with gentle IV sedation. Patients are awake but comfortable, and follow-up care is provided by the same surgeons who performed the procedure, reinforcing continuity. Compare this to the sad and scary situation of office-based surgery, where only a pill is given and additional sedation cannot be administered due to the lack of IV access and no anesthesiologist present.

The Cataract Surgery Center of Milford offers a rare combination: hospital-level safety standards, cutting-edge technology, transparent insurance coverage approved by all insurers, and local care. Patients do not need to travel far, go outside their insurance network, or pay out-of-pocket fees to receive exceptional cataract and glaucoma treatment. For many in Milford and surrounding communities, world-class eye care is not only accessible—it is right here at home.

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# What's Coming Up at The Center

The Center, located at 150 Goulding St., Holliston, is open Monday-Friday, from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Reach them at (508) 429-0622 or visit <https://www.townofholliston.us/176/Senior-Center-The-Center>.

Following are some highlighted programs coming up:

**Writer's Group:** First Tuesday of the month, 10 a.m., practice writing skills and connect with others. February 3rd prompt: Like the movie, Groundhog Day, what day would you like to live again, or what day would you like to never live through again.

**Book Club:** Second Friday of the month, 1:30 p.m., February 13th selection: *Mrs. Lincoln's Dressmaker*, by Jennifer Chiaverini

**Monthly Breakfast, 2nd Tuesday of Month:** February 10, \$5, presented by Senior Support Foundation (SSF)

**Lion's Club Lunch, February 22nd, Cole Court,** pasta, meatballs, salad and dessert, sign up by calling (508) 429-6266.

**Estate Planning & Wealth Management,** with Attorney Jay Marsden, February 10, reg-



ister at (508) 429-0622

**Java with Jay (Zoom), February 26,** topic: "What happens when your MassHealth application gets denied?" Register and receive Zoom link by calling (508) 429-0622.

**Dementia-Friendly Free Lunch & Learn:** The Holliston and Sherborn COAs have part-

nered on this program, funded by Bay State Federal Savings Bank Charitable Foundation. Friday, February 27: Dance for Connection, 12-1 p.m., Sherborn Town Hall, 19 Washington St., 2nd Fl., Sherborn. Must RSVP for lunch. Register by calling The Center at (508) 429-0622.

**Keefe Tech Lunch at The Center:** This new partnership provides nutritious lunches for seniors and learning opportunities for teens in the Culinary Arts program at Keefe Tech. February 24 (Tuscan Chicken) at 12 p.m. \$5 per meal, per person, sign up a week in advance by calling The Center at (508) 429-0622.

**Expressive Art Therapy:** Facilitated by Franci Dumar of Clear Guidance, LLC, February 12, an interactive program for adults with cognitive decline and their care partners offering participants a creative outlet for self-expression, emotional exploration and social connection. Register for free through the Sherborn Council on Aging at (508) 65107858, or [coa@sherbornma.org](mailto:coa@sherbornma.org). You can also call The Center at (508) 429-0622.

**Community Education Program:** Understanding Carotid Artery Disease, February 6, 10 a.m., with Board-Certified Vascular Surgeon Laura T. Boitano, MD. Light breakfast provided, please call The Center to register at (508) 429-0622.

**Celebrate Black History Month:** February 10, 2 p.m., Film: 13th, documentary directed by Ava DuVernay. February 27, 1 p.m., Film: *I Am Not Your Negro*, directed by Raoul Peck and narrated by Samuel L. Jackson. Please sign up by calling (508) 429-0622.

**Jazzy Dessert Social February 12:** Features live jazz from the Metrowest Jazz Project, sponsored by the Timothy Daniels House and homemade sweets. Sign up in advance by calling (508) 429-0622.

**Free Tax Preparation:** AARP Foundation Tax-Aide Volunteers will help you prepare and file your return. The service is free and offered at The Center. While the AARP is focused on taxpayers who are over 50 with low to moderate income, the service is open to anyone of any age. Appointments begin February 9th and continue Mondays through the first week of April. Call The Center at (508) 429-0622.

## CALENDAR

### February 2

**Morning Book Club, 11 a.m.,** Holliston Public Library, 752 Washington ST., Holliston, *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury, registration required, [www.hollistonlibrary.org](http://www.hollistonlibrary.org)

### February 4

**Hip Hop Popular Culture: Where's the Beef? Kendrick Lamar and Drake, 6 p.m.,** Holliston Public Library, 752 Washington ST., Holliston, registration required, [www.hollistonlibrary.org](http://www.hollistonlibrary.org)

### February 5

**Stirring the Pot: A Conversation on Culinary Creativity, 7 p.m.,** Medfield Council on Aging, 1 Ice House Rd., Medfield, leading chefs, authors, and culinary entrepreneurs share stories and insights into the creative process behind the plate, free, but suggested donation \$25, register at [www.bellforge.org](http://www.bellforge.org).

**Stony Brook Camera Club Member competition, 7:30 p.m.,** Zoom, [stonybrookcc.com](http://stonybrookcc.com)

### February 6

**Holliston Pantry Shelf SOUPerbowl, 5-8 p.m.,** St. Mary's Church Function Hall, 8 Church St., Holliston. More info. at [www.hollistonpantryshelf.org/souperbowl-2026](http://www.hollistonpantryshelf.org/souperbowl-2026).

**Edgar Allen Poe comes to HPL, 3:30 p.m.,** Holliston Public Library, 752 Washington ST., Holliston, registration required, [www.hollistonlibrary.org](http://www.hollistonlibrary.org)

### February 7

**A Tasting of Teas from India, Japan and China, 10:30 a.m.—12 p.m.,** Holliston Public Library, 752 Washington ST., Holliston, registration required, [www.hollistonlibrary.org](http://www.hollistonlibrary.org)

**Holliston Lions Meat Raffle, 12:30-4:30 p.m. & Superbowl Squares number-picking, 4 p.m.,** Casey's Pub, 81 Railroad St., Holliston. Benefits HABA and local charities. Squares available at <https://www.cognitiforms.com/MD33Lio.../SuperBowlSquares2026>

### February 9

**History Book Club, 10:30 a.m.,** Holliston Public Library, 752 Washington ST., Holliston, registration required, [www.hollistonlibrary.org](http://www.hollistonlibrary.org), *Taking Manhattan* by Russell Shorto,

### February 10

**Mystery Book Club, 11 a.m.,** Holliston Public Library, 752 Washington ST., Holliston, registration required, [www.hollistonlibrary.org](http://www.hollistonlibrary.org), *When the Bough Breaks* by Jonathan Kellerman

### February 12

**Stony Brook Camera Club "Vision, Passion, and Projects" with Cole Thompson, 7:30 p.m.,** Zoom, [stonybrookcc.com](http://stonybrookcc.com)

### February 17

**Tuesday Matinee, 12:30—2 p.m.: Hidden Figures,** Holliston Public Library, 752 Washington ST., Holliston

### February 19

**Stony Brook Camera Club "Photographing Rhode Island" with Kevin Bruff, 7:30 p.m.,** Anglican Church of the Redeemer, 195 Main Street, Franklin, MA, Hybrid program, [stonybrookcc.com](http://stonybrookcc.com)

### February 23

**She Can Do It: Real/Reel Women & Midcentury Mysteries, 6:30 p.m.,** Holliston Public Library, 752 Washington ST., Holliston, registration required, [www.hollistonlibrary.org](http://www.hollistonlibrary.org)

### February 26

**Trivia Night with the Friends of HPL @ Rushford's, 7-9 p.m.,** Rushford & Sons - 747 Washington St., Holliston, fundraiser for Friends of Holliston Public Library  
**Stony Brook Camera Club Cabin Fever Workshop, 7:30 p.m.,** Anglican Church of the Redeemer, 195 Main Street, Franklin, MA, [stonybrookcc.com](http://stonybrookcc.com)

**MetroWest Boston Visitors Bureau (MBVB) Annual Tourism Summit and Legislative Breakfast, "The World Is Coming: Preparing for Visitors, Impact & Opportunity", 8 a.m. – 12 p.m.,** Renaissance Framingham Hotel & Conference Center, To view the full agenda and register, visit [www.metrowestvisitors.org/annual\\_meeting](http://www.metrowestvisitors.org/annual_meeting)

# Holliston Public Library February Adult Programs

752 Washington Street  
(508) 429-0617  
www.hollistonlibrary.org

## Morning Book Club

Monday, February 2 11 a.m.- 12:30 p.m.: Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury\*

**Hip Hop Popular Culture: Where's the Beef?** Kendrick Lamar and Drake

Wednesday, February 4 6-7:30 p.m.\*

Hip Hop as a culture has influenced the world. According to Land and Stovall (2009) hip hop began in the late 1970s, and is a billion-dollar, international industry which involves music, clothing, break dancing, electronics, media, and DJs. The culture has become a way of life for many young people. This lecture will ask students to analyze the current state of Hip Hop. Kenrick Lamar and Drake—Where's the Beef?

Rondae Drafts is the facilitator. She is the Executive Director of MUSIC Dance.edu and an Adjunct Professor at Mount Wachusett Community College.

## Edgar Allen Poe comes to HPL

Friday, February 6 3:30—4:30 p.m.\*

Edgar Allen Poe is coming to HPL! Come see the resurrection of this legendary author through the talents of Campbell Harmon. From pioneering the detective genre to shaping modern science fiction and horror, Poe's contri-

butions are immeasurable. His tormented love for his wife, Virginia, fueled the haunting verses of "The Raven," while his enigmatic death in 1849 continues to ignite speculation to this day. Be transported into Poe's world as Harmon delivers a spellbinding one-man show, intertwining dramatic re-enactments, historical biography, and dynamic interactions with the audience. To be broadcast later on HCAT.



## A Tasting of Teas from India, Japan and China

Saturday, February 7 10:30 a.m.—12 p.m.\*

Discover the rich and diverse world of teas from India, Japan and China in this guided tasting class. Led by Sandeep Hazarika, we will be tasting a total of 5 teas: two bold, malty Assam teas—famous as the foundation of English and Irish Breakfast blends, one delicate, aromatic Darjeeling tea often called the "Champagne of Teas", one traditional Japanese Sencha green tea and one mid roasted Oolong tea from China. As part of the class, we will explore the origin, history, and cultural significance behind each one. Throughout

the session, we'll discuss the traditions that shape the flavor and character of every tea you will be tasting. Handmade biscotti from Bakers Lane Biscotti will also be served with the teas.



## History Book Club

Monday, February 9 10:30—11:30 a.m.: *Taking Manhattan* by Russell Shorto\*

## Mystery Book Club

Tuesday, February 10 11 a.m.—12:30 p.m.: *When the Bough Breaks* by Jonathan Kellerman

## Tuesday Matinee

Tuesday, February 17 12:30—2 p.m.: *Hidden Figures*

Come to the library the third Tuesday of every month and watch a new movie! This month's showing is *Hidden Figures*. Three brilliant African-American women at NASA -- Katherine Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan and Mary Jackson -- serve as the brains behind one of the greatest operations in history: the launch of astronaut John Glenn into orbit, a stunning achievement that restored the nation's confidence, turned around the Space Race and galvanized the world. Running time 2 hours and 7 minutes. Rated PG (2016.)



## She Can Do It: Real/Reel Women & Midcentury Mysteries

Monday, February 23 6:30—7:30 p.m.\*

Join mystery and suspense authors Janet Raye Stevens and Sharon Healy-Yang for an engaging, multi-media event revealing some intriguing inspirations for creating a mystery set circa WWII. Using film clips, anecdotes, and excerpts from their books, Janet and Sharon talk about 1940s women in real as well as 'reel' life and how these smart, stylish, and wise-cracking gals in books and film inspired their own 1940s-set mysteries.

This lively blend of mysteries, movies, and lots of banter is one you won't want to miss!



## Trivia Night with the Friends of HPL @ Rushfords

Thursday, February 26 7-9 p.m.

It's trivia night at Rushford & Sons to support the Friends of HPL! Geeks Who Drink will be supporting The Friends of Holliston Public Library with a Quiz For A Cause. So get your team together and meet over at Rushford & Sons for trivia! Fun, prizes, and more!

Rushford & Sons - 747 Washington St. Holliston, MA

The Friends of the Holliston Public Library support upcoming special programs, including:

- Claffin Hill Symphony — A Vehicle of Community in Central Mass
- Terrarium Workshop with Tower Hill
- Needle-felted "painting" and more!

No Registration Required

Programs are largely supported by the Friends of the Library. Your donations help support these programs.

Go to the Holliston Library website: [www.hollistonlibrary.org](http://www.hollistonlibrary.org) to donate or become a member.

\*Registration required.

## Stony Brook Camera Club February Meetings

The Stony Brook Camera Club meets in person and/or virtually on Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. from September to June. In person meetings are held at the Anglican Church of the Redeemer, 195 Main Street, Franklin. Our meetings feature speakers, competitions, and discussions of general interest. We also sponsor a number of photography activities and workshops throughout the year.

SBCC includes and welcomes photographers of all abilities.

Our program for February:

- February 5: (Zoom) Member competition
- February 12: (Zoom) "Vision, Passion, and Projects" with Cole Thompson
- February 19: (Hybrid) "Photographing Rhode Island" with Kevin Bruff
- February 26: (In Person) Cabin Fever Workshop

See our website : [stonybrookcc.com](http://stonybrookcc.com) for a calendar of events and member information.

## HCA Receives Grant Awards

Hopkinton Center for the Arts (HCA) is thrilled to announce it has been awarded \$110,000 in grant funding from the Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism to support the next exciting chapter in the future of Hopkinton's historic Center School.

The grant will partially fund architectural and engineering schematic designs for this landmark building located at the iconic starting line of the Boston Marathon in downtown Hopkinton.

In a collaborative public-private partnership, Hopkinton

Center for the Arts, Hopkinton Youth & Family Services, and Hopkinton Parks & Recreation are working together with the permanent building committee and the town of Hopkinton to breathe new life into the Center School following the Town's endorsement through a request for proposal process. The vision is to preserve the building's historic exterior while reinventing the interior as a flexible, mixed-use space that will serve residents of all ages and strengthen Hopkinton's cultural and civic life.

HCA has also announced it has received a \$10,000 gen-

eral operating grant from the Foundation for MetroWest. The grant will help address key operational needs as HCA works to expand accessibility to the arts for all ages. Flexible operating support such as this allows the organization to remain responsive, resilient, and focused on delivering high-quality, accessible arts experiences to the MetroWest community.

The Community Foundation for MetroWest is a community foundation that improves the quality of life in 30+ MetroWest communities.

# Sports

## New Coach Taking the Reins at Holliston

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,  
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Moira Phillips grew up playing basketball in New Jersey and when she was at Eastern Nazarene College, a division 3 school in Quincy she knew that she wanted to eventually coach basketball. Two years ago, she moved to Bellingham where she was teaching Biology and Anatomy, and it was here that her coaching career started to take off.

Athletic Director Mike Connors knew that Phillips wanted to coach, especially basketball, the sport she played and loved. Connors set her on a track to begin coaching – first the New Jersey native would begin coaching middle school track and eventually moved up to junior varsity field hockey for Bellingham.

“Being that I played basketball and it was my sport, Mike knew that is where I wanted to go towards,” Phillips said. “When a vacancy came about in Holliston, he connected me with (AD) Matt Baker.”

Having never actually coached girls’ basketball, Phillips started watching film on the Panthers’ basketball team from last year and didn’t really know what this Holliston team would look like this year without their top player from the year prior.

“Coming in at this point, I knew that is was going to be a rebuilding year but didn’t realize how much rebuilding it was actually going to be,” the new coach said. “Over the first handful of games, we’ve been able to score 40 points in one game, and the rest have been in the 20’s. We are having a hard time scoring, and you obviously can’t win games with these types of numbers.”

Holliston’s only being able to score in the 20’s left the first-year coach dumbfounded. During practice, things looked good, and the team seemed to know how to box out and play defense, but come game time, practice was not translating on the court and the young team looked to be in panic mode for a good part of

the contest.

“I originally thought that we were going to be able to go at least .500, now I really don’t know what to expect,” Phillips said. “After watching them perform in practice, I was thinking definite playoffs, but unless we can start translating what we do in practice to games, I am unsure of what this team is going to be able to accomplish.”

At the time of this writing, the Panthers were sporting an 0-5 record. Senior Sophia Lynch, who is coming off the bench after an ACL injury incurred last year, is currently the team’s high scorer, averaging 7 points per contest. Phillips is hoping that, by the time the second half of the season gets underway, that Lynch will be back onto the court as a starter, as she was before her injury.

“I am hoping that she’ll be ready for more playing time and that she provides right off the bat,” Phillips said. “You can tell that she has the skills and the ability as soon as she comes off the bench and enters the game. Her ball handling skills and shooting abilities has opposing coaches worried. I hope that she can get into a flow and the rest of the team will follow her lead.”

While the team waits for the emergence of Lynch, Campbell Harris has contributed a few games where she has been able



**New Holliston Girls' Basketball Coach Moira Phillips, who coached middle school track and junior varsity field hockey in Bellingham, was thrilled at the opportunity to coach a team playing the sport she loves. The team has, however, faced some scoring challenges.**

to knock down 10-12 points. Phillips will be looking to Harris, one of the team’s big players, to use her height to her advantage and begin scoring even more over the second half of the season.

As a team, Holliston’s shooting percentage is low, and Phillips is looking for her team to start doing the little things, like hitting the open jumpers while making their lay-ups, hoping to bring those shooting percentages up.

In addition to the squad’s low shooting percentage, Phillips has found that the Panther girls are also having difficulty with their half court game. In addition to its being non-existent, it looks as

though some of the girls are just there for fun, but it is also fun to win sometimes.

“As coaches, we have really had to push them in practice and threaten them with running if they can’t pick it up a notch,” she said.

Originally, Phillips was hoping to get this team into the post-season, but at this moment that doesn’t look as though that is something in the near future. With that, the Coach has adjusted her goals to looking for game situation improvement. Being that the majority of the starters are seniors, Phillips will eventually look to the underclassmen to take over those roles and get them some experience for next year.

As the younger girls begin to see more varsity action down

the stretch of the season, Phillips will start to wonder who will be taking over the scoring role when Lynch graduates.

“After Sophia leaves, we are going to have to look at everyone to contribute on the scoring end instead of having just that one individual,” she said. “Thus, the reasoning to get the younger girls some action down the stretch, so they can become acclimated for the next year.”

Phillips didn’t think it was going to be such a tough transition to taking over the Holliston girls’ basketball program this winter, but she is hoping that those coming back will be trying to hone their skills over the rest of the season as well as into the off-season so that Holliston can bring their game back to the court and show the other Tri-Valley League team that they are ready and willing to show they belong.

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**& LET US KNOW!**

## Holliston Cultural Council Unveils New Logo & Launches Newsletter

Holliston, MA — The Holliston Cultural Council is excited to announce the launch of a new logo and a new community newsletter.

The updated logo reflects the Council's continued commitment to supporting arts, culture, and creativity throughout Holliston. The mix of typefaces, rainbow gradient, and circular paint splatters come together to represent a creative continuum, where different cultures, mediums, and ideas unite to form a beautiful whole.

Alongside the new look, the Holliston Cultural Council has introduced a newsletter to keep residents informed about funded projects, upcoming events, grant opportunities, and other cultural news in town.

Community members are encouraged to sign up for the newsletter to stay connected and up to date. Visit the Holliston Cultural Council's Facebook page or scan the QR code to subscribe.



Sign Up for our Newsletter

## State Officials Issue Annual Reminder on Open Burning Season

Stow, MA - Massachusetts' fire and environmental leaders are reminding residents to use caution, care, and common sense if they plan to burn certain agricultural waste during open burning season, which runs from January 15 to May 1.

State Fire Marshal Jon M. Davine, Commissioner Bonnie Heiple of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP), and Chief Fire Warden David Celino of the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) said restrictions on open burning are imposed at the state and local levels.

"Open burning season applies only to specific types of fuel and is always limited based on the daily fire hazard, environmental concerns, and location," said State Fire Marshal Davine. "Even where burning is authorized, you must have a permit from your local fire department, and you must be able to extinguish the fire on a moment's notice. Please make safety your priority when burning."

"Improper open burning creates safety risks and can harm air quality," said MassDEP Commissioner Bonnie Heiple. "Only burning approved natural materials — like driftwood and prunings — and burning on 'good air days,' when pollution levels are low and air circulates well, ensures these fires can be managed safely."

"Massachusetts residents have seen just how quickly outdoor fires can grow out of control," said DCR Chief Fire Warden Celino. "We encourage everyone to exercise caution - don't risk a fire that puts you, your home, or your community at risk. Burn only approved materials, always get a permit from your local fire department, and ensure that any fire is extinguished properly and completely."

These restrictions are authorized by 310 CMR 7.07, which sets baseline requirements based on air quality and allows for "no burn" days; MGL chapter 48, section 13, which prohibits any open air fire unless a permit is issued; and the Massachusetts Comprehensive Fire Safety Code, which gives local fire chiefs the authority to impose additional limits. Open burning may only be conducted:

- With a permit issued in advance by the local fire department;
- Between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- At least 75 feet from all dwellings and without causing a nuisance;
- As close as possible to the source of material being burned; and
- When it will not cause or contribute to a condition of air pollution.

In Holliston, Open Burning Season runs from January 15 to April 30.

Permits are valid for two consecutive days, and can be obtained online through Holliston Community Connect at <https://www.communityconnect.io/info/ma-holliston>.

There is no charge for the permit.

### What you need to know:

- **Permit Duration:** Each permit is valid for two consecutive days.

- **What can be burned:** Forestry debris only (brush, cane, driftwood, and forestry debris).
- **Timing:** Burning is allowed between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- **Deadlines:** All fires must be ignited by 12 p.m. (noon) and must be *completely* extinguished by 4 p.m.
- **Important:** Burning status is determined daily based on weather and air quality. Before you light your fire, please check the daily burning status posted on the Holliston Fire Department website.

Persons who burn unlawfully or allow a fire to grow out of control could be held liable for firefighting costs or face fines or even jail time.

### Open Burning Safety

- An adult should tend to the fire at all times and keep tools to extinguish it close by.
- Burn small amounts at a time.
- Never use gasoline, kerosene, or other accelerants to start the fire.
- Don't wait for the fire department to tell you that it has become unsafe to burn: put the fire out if winds pick up or the weather changes. Most fires get out of control during sudden wind changes.
- If the fire gets out of control, call the local fire department right away.

Agricultural Burning Permits are valid year-round.

Only certain agricultural waste may be burned. This includes brush, cane, driftwood, residential forestry debris, fruit tree and bush prunings, raspberry stalks, infected bee hives, trees and brush from agricultural land clearing, and fungus-infected elm wood if no other acceptable means of disposal is available. It is unlawful to burn leaves, grass, hay, stumps, tires, household trash, construction materials, demolition debris, or brush, trees, cane, or driftwood from commercial or industrial land clearing.

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# Spring

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# 26.2 Foundation Receives Athletic Brewing “Two For The Trails” Grant for Hopkinton Trail Development

Hopkinton, MA - The 26.2 Foundation has been selected by Athletic Brewing Company to receive a 2025 “Two For The Trails” grant. Named after Athletic co-founder and CEO Bill Shufelt’s family tradition of taking two beers to toast post-trail adventures, this program gives back up to \$2 million annually to protect and restore outdoor spaces across the globe. The 26.2 Foundation grant will be used to bring two miles of community trails to life on the future International Marathon Center (IMC) property in Hopkinton, MA.

With the \$12,000 grant, the 26.2 Foundation, in partnership with the Town of Hopkinton Trails Committee, will enhance the network of old farm roads that wind through nearly 20 acres of former farmland

and connect to more than 160 acres of protected open space – space on or adjacent to the site of the future 19-acre property earmarked for the 26.2 Foundation’s IMC on Route 135. These grassy pathways, once used for tractors and nursery operations, will soon offer runners and walkers a unique way to explore the landscape surrounding the future IMC.

“This trail system isn’t just a path through nature,” said Kim Chisholm, 26.2 Foundation executive director, “it’s an early connection between the IMC and the community, offering accessible recreation within a mile of downtown and preserving this cherished land for generations to come.”

“We are grateful for Athletic Brewing’s support,” said Peter LaGoy, chair of the Hopkinton

Trails Committee. “This grant motivates us to continue our work implementing plans for the management and operations of trails throughout the community.”

Hopkinton Town Manager Elaine Lazarus added, “Hopkinton is a community that respects and appreciates its open space and natural resources, which are key elements in creating a healthy community. The Athletic Brewing grant will help us enhance and expand a trail system that meets the increasing demand of facilities and programs – which is a priority for us.”

“In 2025, Two For The Trails received more than 500 applications requesting over \$10 million in funding – proof of the growing need to invest in the environments and commu-

nities where we live, work, and adventure,” said Cara Wilson, Impact Manager, Athletic Brewing Company. “With up to \$2 million in funding, we’re proud to support 241 projects across the U.S. and Canada that will expand outdoor access and improve natural spaces. These efforts will balance recreation with environmental care, helping ensure we leave our planet better than we found it. We’re honored to partner with so many nonprofits doing this important work,” she added.

### About the 26.2 Foundation

The 26.2 Foundation advances the global sport of marathoning while harnessing the power of the human spirit and its capacity for good.

Our signature project is the development of the International Marathon Center (IMC) and has been designed to honor, celebrate and inspire the power of the human spirit, and recognize excellence and individual achievement around the world. Through its dynamic cultural and education programs, state-of-the-art facilities and revolving interactive exhibitions, it promises to build community and enrich learning in new and unique ways at local, regional and global levels.

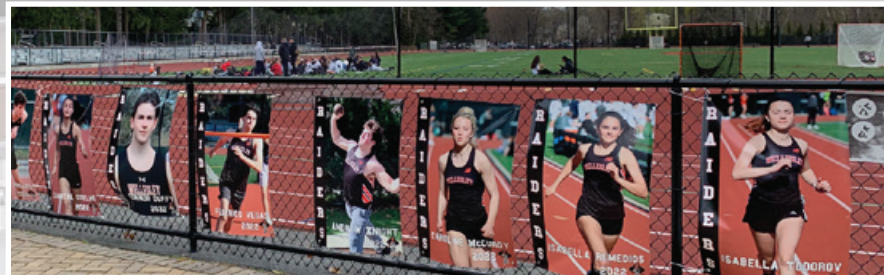
### About Athletic Brewing Company

Athletic Brewing Company is America’s largest dedicated non-alcoholic brewer. Learn more at [www.athleticbrewing.com](http://www.athleticbrewing.com).

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