

# localtownpages Franklin

Vol. 17 No. 2

Free to Every Home and Business Every Month

April 1, 2026

## Franklin Farmers Put the “Unity” in Community

By NATALEE WEBB

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a method of distributing local farmers' crops. Consumers buy seasonal “shares” of crops in the winter, providing farmers with capital needed for their spring, summer and fall harvests. Franklin Moms and cooking aficionados, Meg Barrett-Hickey and Eileen McAndrew Smith are devotees of CSAs. They laud it not only for providing tasty and delicious foods but for fostering community and education. CSAs' connection with the local public cultivates a richer community with healthier diets.

According to mass.gov, of



Fairmount Fruit Farm, Night Owl Farm and the Franklin Farmers Market all offer CSA shares.

the more than 7,000 farms in Massachusetts, 284 are CSAs with three right here in Frank-

lin, including Fairmount Fruit

**FARMERS**

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## Quattro Eroi Lodge 1414 Turns 100!

Franklin's Order Sons & Daughters of Italy Plans Anniversary Events

By JUDITH DORATO O'GARA

From the 1880s to 1920, the number of Italian immigrants to the United States rose from 300,000 to over four million, with Italian immigrants representing over 10% of the nation's foreign-born population, according to the Library of Congress. During this “Great Italian Migration,” in 1905, Ordine Figli d'Italia, the Order Sons of Italy in America® (OSDIA) was created as a support system for Italian immigrants, to assist them with citizenship, provide health/death benefits, educational opportunities and to assist them



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with assimilating into American society. Franklin's Order Sons of Italy in America, which would be renamed Order Sons and Daughters of Italy in America® (OSDIA) in 2016, was created in March 1926, just over a century ago. This spring, “Quattro Eroi” Lodge #1414 will celebrate this milestone.

**LODGE**

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## FARMERS

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Farm located in the northeast and the Night Owl Farm in the southwestern portion of Franklin. Running from June through October, Franklin's favorite pastime the Farmer's Market, which opens in June, is also a CSA. Both Fairmount Fruit and the North Owl farms market their wares there.

Meg, mother of two and a Franklin resident for over 10 years, is a frequent Farmers Market connoisseur and has been buying CSA shares for 6 years. She appreciates helping local farmers establish their crops but is most grateful for the community experiences her two children get to be a part of.

"They become part of the food process, meet the farmer and it especially gives them a sense of community." Meg went on to say, "Today's community connection is often lacking, and the CSA farming method helps instill community."

Fairmount Fruit Farm has been fostering that esprit de corps for more than 100 years,

since the Koshivas family migrated here from Greece in the 1920's. They labored on the farm until they were able to buy it. The farm now has 50 acres off Lincoln Street, another 50 across the street that they lease to others, and 20 acres of orchards; primarily apples. CJ, a 4th generation Koshivas, revealed that their focus this year is to double their share offerings to the public.

What sets this farm apart from other local farms is its multitude of activities and events, including a petting zoo and greenhouse rentals. It is also an Agritourism or Destination farm. As a popular farm, folks will travel there from all over to get their "farm experience."

Open year round, the busi-



Families like the Hickey family, children shown here, take advantage of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) shares offered by local farmers. Consumers get a regular share of produce, and the farmers gain capital to invest in their business.

ness peaks when families come in the fall to pet the sheep, walk the fields, and honor their New England heritage of picking farm ripened apples and pumpkins. Visit their website at [www.fairmountfruit.com](http://www.fairmountfruit.com) for

## FARMERS

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## LODGE

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"Quattro Eroi" means "four heroes." Franklin's lodge, part of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts ([www.osiama.org](http://www.osiama.org)) and the Supreme Lodge of the United States ([www.osdia.org](http://www.osdia.org)), is named after four Italian-American resi-

500 attended.

While the original mission of the Lodge was to assist immigrants adjusting to life in a new country, today, Quattro Eroi President Gino Carlucci says, "The objectives now are mainly social and cultural. It is a great fun way for those wishing to connect with their roots, celebrate Italian achievements, and pass



Shown are members of Quattro Eroi Lodge #1414, Franklin Order Sons and Daughters of Italy, at Italian Night at Fenway. The Lodge turns 100 this year.

dents of Franklin killed in World War I, Emilio Daddario, Alfred Mucciarone, Alesandro Patete, and Patrick Ristaino. Relatives of these men still live in Franklin.

Quattro Eroi Lodge 1414's creation celebration was a grand affair at the Morse Theater on May 2nd, 1926, with officials from the Grand Lodge and members from the neighboring Mansfield Lodge welcoming and initiating the group. About

along cherished traditions to future generations. The Lodge also sponsors an annual scholarship and supports several charities." The lodge aims to:

- Preserve and promote Italian culture, traditions, and language in America.
- Support educational, charitable, and social initiatives that benefit our members and the local community.
- Unite men and women of Italian descent, fostering pride and solidarity through shared heritage.

• Encourage civic involvement and volunteerism, making a positive impact together.

Lisa Oxford joined Quattro Eroi Lodge 1414 with her sister, Roberta Trahan, a few years ago.

"My great uncle, Alesandro Patete, was my paternal grandmother's brother, and he fought in WWII and was killed in action," says Oxford, "My parents became very active in the lodge probably around the 1980s, and it was very vibrant," says Oxford, adding, "At one point, my father was the president. They'd have dinners, and they could cook. They were happy to engage

## LODGE

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## localtownpages

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## FARMERS

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more information and schedules.

An 8-year Franklin resident, Eileen has been buying CSA shares for 20 years and relishes the freshness of food that

normally think of buying. We eat better, healthier, and support our local farmers.” Like Meg, she also supplements her farm purchases with visits to Franklin’s Farmers’ Market.

Located in the southwestern area of Franklin is the Night Owl Farm. Established in 2021, its friendly new owner,

announced the expansion of her enterprise with the opening of a Farm Stand this spring at Hillside Nurseries on Washington Street near Prospect.

Aside from its human powered (no tractors), organic and pesticide-free farming with kudos to its female ownership, what also sets this local farm apart is its educational programs. During a one-week daily camp, lucky 3-9-year-olds get to learn farming taught using the disciplines of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics).

The children’s educational program runs for 8 weeks during the summer. For adults the farm offers workshops on homesteading and gardening along with crafting events. Visit their website [www.nightowlfarm.org](http://www.nightowlfarm.org) for information and schedules.

In addition to these Franklin CSA options, Medway Community Farm also offers CSA shares to folks in neighboring communities. Find out more about their program at [www.medwaycommunityfarm.org](http://www.medwaycommunityfarm.org).

With all that noted, this research and fresh air has made me hungry.

## LODGE

*continued from page 2*

with people who shared their culture.” Nowadays, she believes the culture has become diluted as generations have become more Americanized, and people are busier than they used to be.

The group, however, is still active, recently sponsoring an Italian film festival at the Franklin Historical Museum, taking a trip to a Red Sox game on Italian Night at Fenway, and presenting a Senior Center roundtable discussion about the Italian immigrant experience. Past events have included dinners, shows, cooking demonstrations (available on Franklin TV’s YouTube channel) and trips.

To celebrate 100 years, the Quattro Eroi Lodge welcomes the community to the following:

Beginning Saturday, April 11, the Franklin Historical Museum, will host an exhibit in honor of this anniversary which includes many photographs and memorabilia of the Lodge and the local Italian community and will kick off related events. Organizers are also hoping to conduct oral

history interviews and to gather old photographs for scanning and sharing!

Next, the Lodge is sponsoring the Historical Museum’s “Second Sunday” speaker series with author and historian Stephen Puleo on April 12 at 1 p.m. Mr. Puleo is the author of many books, including *Dark Tide*, documenting the events of the great molasses spill in 1919 the North End as well as *The Boston Italians*, in which he describes how Italian immigrants and their families overcame poverty, illiteracy and prejudice to become an important element of civic, business and cultural life in Boston and the region.

Finally, a celebratory Pasta Dinner will be held at the VFW Hall on Pond Street on Saturday, May 16. The event will include great Italian food, conversation, a remembrance of the men for whom the Lodge is named, and raffle baskets and auction items. Tickets are \$20 (\$15 for members).

Follow Quattro Eroi Lodge #1414’s activities on Facebook. For more information, reach out to [quattroeroi@gmail.com](mailto:quattroeroi@gmail.com).

Thanks to Alan Earls for his contributions to this article.



The Night Owl’s new farm stand location on Washington Street in Franklin.

is usually harvested that same day. She commented on this food distribution method and of its benefits,

“I get to try food I wouldn’t

Ali Coakley is a motivated young mother. The more than 6-acre farm has been in operation since the mid-80s. Entering its sixth year, Ali recently

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# Luck O’ the Irish Sees Good Weather for Rotary Brunch

By JUDITH DORATO O’GARA

The Rotary Club of Franklin, MA welcomed nearly 100 seniors to a St. Patrick’s Day-themed luncheon held at 1000 Central Park Terrace in Franklin on Saturday, March 14th, 2026. Although the event, originally planned as a Valentine’s Day brunch, had been twice rescheduled due to inclement weather, senior residents of Franklin joined in with good cheer, many wearing their finest green attire.

Harney Crawford Academy students donated a performance of traditional Irish stepdance, and Lee-Ann Barkhouse entertained seniors with exercised derived from her Ageless Grace® Brain Health Exercise Program.

Rotarian and Co-President Joe Collins created the menu, arising before dawn to prepare vegetable frittata, ham and cheese frittata, roasted potato



Above: Seniors enjoyed a hearty brunch prepared by Rotary Club members. Photo by Paul Vicario, Vicario Studio

and his famous French toast among other breakfast favorites.

Fourteen teenage boys from Franklin’s Lion’s Heart organization helped serve as well as assisted seniors in Barkhouse’s presentation.

If you would like more information about Rotary Club

of Franklin, MA, or to become a member, please contact Diane Padula, padularotary@gmail.com. Rotary meets the first and third Tuesday, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. at the Rome Restaurant, 4 East Central Street (Rte. 140), Franklin.

# Franklin Rotary Volunteers Create Meals for Food Pantry

Recently, Rotary Club of Franklin, MA members joined other clubs in Rotary Club District 7910 in Leominster, Mass. to create



100,000 meals to combat food insecurity in their communities. Franklin came home with 12 cases, each containing 36 bags, with six servings per bag to be distributed to patrons of the Franklin Food Pantry. Photo used courtesy of Rotary Club of Franklin, MA.



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# Franklin Man Offers Creative Alternatives to Screen Time

BY LISA GENTES-HUNT

One Franklin man is attempting to combat the constant stress of screens with art. Richard Rollingcross, a longtime Franklin resident and retired psychologist, has been offering children and adults an alternative to screen time with his nonprofit, the Time Away From Screens (TAFS) Foundation.

Rollingcross established the nonprofit in 2024 and is hoping to combat Nature Deficit Disorder in children. His goal is to provide educators and parents tools to ease the anxiety and mental overload that excessive technology time can produce.

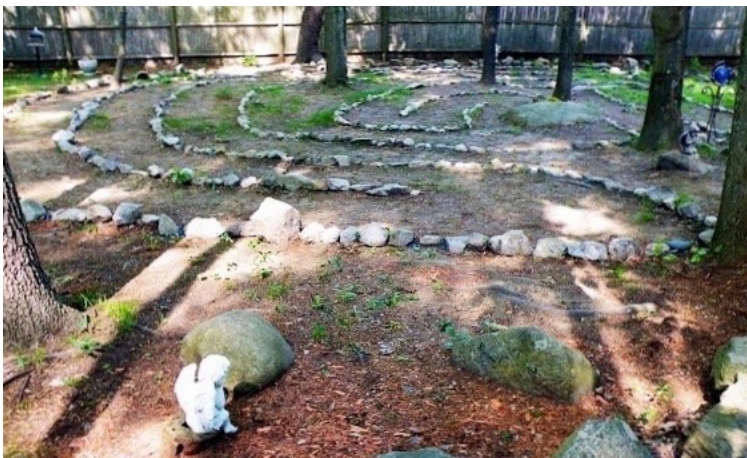
One of those tools is a special type of art called diamond art. “It’s like a paint by number but with gems,” the 71-year-old said.

He discovered the calming

effects of working on a diamond art creation by chance, using a machine he owned for his practice that measures brain waves. He wore it while doing a diamond art creation and the results showed that he was “in a state of deep meditation,” he recalled.

That inspired him to take the finding and apply it to assist those dealing with mental stress, particularly to counter the uptick in anxiety and depression in children seen throughout the nation since 2020.

“I’ve gotten very positive feedback from the teachers of the students who are doing the diamond art, saying that it improves their focus, their concentration, and helps with their emotional regulation,” said Rollingcross, who used to have a practice in Franklin and worked in the Holliston school district.



Labyrinths, like this one Rollingcross created, “offer a single, winding path that encourages reflection and calm focus.”

The Rhode Island College and Boston University graduate with over 30 years of experience in psychology said he became concerned about excessive screen time use in children.

“This is why I created the TAFS foundation - to educate and inform about the dangers of excessive screen time, while providing specific solutions that increase student Time Away From Screens,” he states on his website.

Currently, the foundation works with students in the Judge Baker Center in Boston, the Franklin Senior Center and one local after-school program,

along with Tri County. He is hoping to bring diamond art classes to the library this summer as well, he said.

In all of these facilities, TAFS offers the diamond art class—which allows the participants to create cards, posters or photographs and turn them into these “paint by number” gem-filled masterpieces for free.

“Initially it can be intimidating,” the retired psychologist and Rhode Island native said of the art, which requires steady hands and a lot of patience.

He said doing the diamond art produces a plethora of mental health benefits, especially for

those with anxiety, depression and focus issues.

“It’s a very unique and helpful method,” he noted of the diamond art.

One other creative way to get away from screens is labyrinth walking, which Rollingcross explained as a calming outdoor activity.

In his backyard in 2008, he created a labyrinth out of stones to allow himself to meditate while walking in nature, he said. “Labyrinths can be an effective tool to help address the effects of excessive screen time and its impact on children,” he states on his site.

“Unlike mazes, which present problems to solve, labyrinths offer a single, winding path that encourages reflection and calm focus. This can help children develop the ability to be still with their thoughts - a skill that’s increasingly rare in our screen-saturated environment.”

With two other volunteers, Rollingcross is trying to spread the word about the TAFS art offering and recruiting new volunteers who enjoy working with children and adults.

For more information on diamond art, labyrinth walking, or volunteering, go to TAFSFoundation.org.

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## Franklin Interfaith Council

### A Call to Generosity for Heating Help Fund

With a historic winter season in the books, the requests for heating assistance have been greater than usual and we need your help! Will you donate to help Franklin neighbors in need with their heating bills?

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Since its inception in 1991, the Franklin Interfaith Council has raised funds to help Franklin residents in need of wintertime heating help. Historically used for only oil and propane distributions, the Council voted recently to also include winter electric and gas bills. Our Heating Help

Fund (previously Fuel Assistance Fund) has been nearly depleted, and the heating season isn’t over yet! Distributions in a given year vary depending on need (\*see below). We have already helped 12 neighbors and expect to help a few more this season.

**\*Heating Help Fund Distributions:**

|                       |                       |
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| Oct 2023 – May 2024   | \$5600 (9 neighbors)  |
| Oct 2024 – May 2025   | \$2100 (6 neighbors)  |
| Oct 2025 – March 2026 | \$5780 (12 neighbors) |

For context, we typically raise about \$2100 every year for heating help at our annual Franklin Interfaith Thanksgiving Service. Thank you to all who have donated in years past! With carryover from previous years, we usually start the season with \$3.5 – 5k each October. This coming Fall 2026, we anticipate starting with next to nothing. And so, we call on the generosity of residents of the great town of Franklin to donate so that we can continue to help our neighbors in need! All donations are tax-deductible. No amount is too small.

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Your Money, Your Independence

# The Snow Has Melted—It’s Time for Financial Spring Cleaning



Glenn Brown, CFP

After a winter spent clearing snow and managing the elements, spring brings a welcomed shift. It’s time to open things up and clear out the old. Just as melting snow reveals what’s been hidden all winter, spring is also a chance to uncover areas of your finances that need attention.

Let’s discuss five areas for review to help ensure things remain organized, efficient, and aligned with your planning.

1. Review Beneficiaries

Work benefits, retirement accounts, and life insurance policies pass according to the beneficiary listed, not your will or trust. Studies show ~30% of Americans have outdated beneficiary designations, which can lead to unintended heirs or tax consequences. Life events such as marriage, divorce, births, or deaths can change your intended beneficiaries. Even with-

out major changes, it is wise to confirm that your accounts reflect your intentions.

2. Revisit Auto, Homeowners, and Umbrella Coverage

Homeowners coverage should reflect current replacement costs, auto liability limits should align with your assets, and umbrella insurance provides an extra layer of liability protection.

Rising property values and auto replacement costs naturally raise premiums, but some of the largest increases come after state-approved rate adjustments. While the state may approve a 3–7% increase, insurers can adjust individual policies within their pricing matrix. Examples of policyholders seeing 30–75% increases occur, even if nothing about their home, auto, coverage, or claims history has changed. Because of auto-renewal, most people simply accept and pay. Without shopping your options, you could end up paying far more than necessary.

3. Check Your Estate Plan

Estate planning is not a one-time task. Trusts, wills, powers of attorney, and healthcare proxies should be reviewed to ensure they reflect your current wishes and family circumstances.

While the federal estate tax exemption is roughly 15 million per individual, Massachusetts has a much lower exemption of 2 million, ranking it 49th in the United States. This makes state-

level planning especially important for residents.

Review also allows you to evaluate strategies such as lifetime gifting, trust funding, or charitable giving that may reduce state estate tax exposure. It is also essential to ensure that successor trustees, health care proxies, and other responsible parties have electronic copies of your documents, and that assets intended for a revocable trust are properly titled in the trust’s name. These steps help prevent delays, confusion, and unintended consequences.

4. Consolidate Old Retirement Accounts

Over 50% of Americans have multiple retirement plans still held at prior employers. Leaving accounts scattered can create unnecessary complexity, inconsistent investment strategies, and administrative inefficiencies.

Consolidating into a coordinated structure simplifies management, improves oversight, and makes it easier to rebal-

ance your allocations to align with your evolving goals and risk tolerance. Fewer accounts also allow for better investment alignment, lower fees, smoother required minimum distribution planning, and a clearer view of your overall progress toward retirement.

5. Declutter Accounts and Organization Systems

Just like a closet or garage, your financial life accumulates items you no longer use. Old bank accounts, unused credit cards, dormant investment accounts, and forgotten subscriptions create unnecessary clutter. Closing or consolidating accounts simplifies your administrative burden. Many find it helpful to consolidate to one primary bank account and one primary credit card, making it easier to reconcile expenses, track spending, and perform a cash flow analysis for the year ahead.

Minor Changes with Meaningful Impact

Financial spring cleaning

does not require major changes. It is about maintaining clarity, ensuring alignment, and reducing unnecessary complexity. Taking time to review these baseline areas strengthens your plan, improves organization, and provides confidence that your finances reflect your current priorities and goals.

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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# Why Seeing a College in Person Can Change Everything

One of the most daunting parts of the college admissions process is not writing the essay, filling out the Common Application, or even creating the initial list of colleges. For many students, the hardest step is researching colleges well enough to narrow the list down to 8-12 schools that truly fit academically, socially, and financially.

Visiting a college campus in person is widely considered one of the best and easiest ways to research a school. It allows students to move beyond fancy brochures and websites to experience the campus "vibe" and "fit" firsthand. A campus visit can make college feel much less intimidating.

In my experience, students rarely regret going on college tours - you never want your child to say: "I wish I had toured more schools."

That said, many students avoid visiting campuses. Sometimes it's because they don't want to face the reality of college. Other times it feels easier to

do research from their bedroom through a virtual tour. For some students, walking around an unfamiliar campus with strangers can feel overwhelming. And for many busy high school students, it simply feels like they don't have the time.

While it's true that not every college can be visited in person - distance, schedules, and cost can make that difficult - students should still try to visit at least a few campuses. Even a small number of visits can make a big difference in helping students understand what type of college environment feels right. In my experience once the student starts visiting colleges - everything starts to change!

Whether researching a college in person or virtually, students need to focus on the same questions: What does the campus look like? What academic programs are offered? What is the overall campus vibe? Do the students feel like "your people"? Does the school offer merit scholarships or primarily need-based

aid? And what type of student is the college looking for?

An in person visit makes it much easier to answer these questions.

Students can explore academic buildings, tour residence halls, and sometimes even sit in on a class. Information sessions provide insight into what admissions offices value, such as GPA, course rigor, extracurricular involvement, and preparation for specific majors like engineering, business, or nursing.

One of the most important parts of a campus visit is simply observing student life. Are students studying on the quad? Playing frisbee? Walking together to class? These everyday moments help students sense whether they would feel comfortable there.

Social fit matters more than many students realize. In fact, the number one reason students transfer colleges is social fit - not academic fit.

The dining hall can also be surprisingly revealing. Recently, I visited Xavier University in



**Maryline Michel Kulewicz and Tracy Sullivan of College 101 Admissions Consultants**

Ohio. I loved the school. One of my favorite parts of the visit was simply sitting in the dining hall and watching students interact. Groups of students were laughing, talking, and eating together - students from all different backgrounds. The atmosphere felt warm, friendly, and welcoming.

Campus visits also give students a chance to explore the surrounding area. Many students enjoy having restaurants, coffee shops, or outdoor spaces nearby. Seeing the surrounding town or city helps students imagine what life might look like outside the classroom.

Another benefit of visiting campuses is efficiency. One visit can quickly clarify what a student does - or does not - want in a college. For example, if a student visits a large city university like Boston University and realizes they would prefer a contained traditional campus - they can likely cross other similar city campuses off their list. On the other hand, they may discover they love

the energy of a city campus.

While virtual research can still be helpful through college websites, student reviews, YouTube tours, and virtual campus tours - it often requires visiting multiple sources to gather the same information that can be experienced in a single campus visit.

If possible, one of the greatest gifts a parent, guardian, or older sibling can give a student during the college process is the opportunity to experience a campus in person.

Seeing a college firsthand can bring clarity, confidence, and excitement to the journey ahead.

Good luck and enjoy the journey!

College 101 Admissions Consultants LLC.

Website: [www.mycollege101.com](http://www.mycollege101.com).

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# Celebrate Spring April 25 at 4th Annual Ladybug Trail Spring Walk

On April 25, downtown Franklin celebrates the 4th Annual Ladybug Trail Spring Walk. Shops and restaurants will welcome visitors with fun activities,

Begin the adventure as early as 9 a.m. with a trail map at the Franklin Historical Museum (80 West Central Street), the Franklin Public Library (118 Main Street),

Piana, Franklin Downtown Partnership's Executive Director.

Visit FDP on social media for more details-

<https://www.instagram.com/franklindowntownpartnership/> and

<https://www.facebook.com/franklindowntownpartnership.org/>



The Zentangle Quilt Ladybug is coming out of hibernation. The Children's Museum of Franklin is reintroducing the bug to the Franklin community.

treats, and ladybug-themed promotions for all ages. (Rain date: April 26.)

The day centers around Franklin's unique Ladybug Cultural & Historical Trail — a self-guided walk through the downtown Cultural District where visitors search for two-foot-wide fiber-glass ladybug sculptures among buildings, businesses, and residences. The sculptures connect approximately 25 historical and cultural sites along Main St. and Route 140.

Special ladybug-themed activities will take place at Dean College, the Franklin Public Library, the Franklin Historical Museum and The Children's Museum of Franklin.

In addition to visiting local shops and restaurants for themed food and drinks, discounts, games, activities, and photo opportunities, visitors can also explore the colorful murals created by local artists in the alley next to Birchwood Bakery.

Ferrara's Market (20 West Central Street), or The Little Shop of Olive Oils (9 Main Street).

The Children's Museum of Franklin at 157 Cottage Street opened this past September and (hint hint) they brought the Zentangle ladybug out from hibernation.

The walk can begin as early as 9 a.m. at the Historical Museum and can be enjoyed throughout the day or evening at a relaxed pace — with plenty of opportunities to shop, grab coffee, or sit down for lunch or dinner at a mix of new and longtime downtown favorites.

While April 25 marks the spring kickoff, the Ladybug Trail is open year-round for anyone who wants to explore downtown Franklin at their leisure.

"The Ladybug Trail Spring Walk offers a relaxed, family-friendly way to celebrate spring while discovering the history, art, and local businesses that make Franklin unique," said Lisa

# Franklin Recreation Plans Egg Hunt, Earth Day Events

Franklin Recreation will sponsor Peter Cottontail's Eggcellent Adventure at 10 a.m. on April 3rd at Franklin's Beaver Pond, 450 Beaver St., Franklin. The event, limited to 150 participants, will include an egg hunt (chocolates from Pandolfi's in Bellingham) and face-painting.

Later in the month, on April 18th, many hands will make light work at Franklin Recreation's annual Earth Day clean up, from 9 a.m.-12 p.m. at Beaver Pond.

To register for these events, visit <https://franklinma.myrec.com>.

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# The b.LUXE *beauty beat*

## The Secret to Healthier Hair Might Be... Your Scalp

When we talk about hair care, the conversation usually revolves around the hair itself. Shine. Volume. Color. The perfect cut.

But there's a quiet truth that hair professionals have always known and science continues to confirm: the real starting point for healthy hair is not the hair at all.

It's the scalp.

The scalp is skin. The same living, breathing organ that covers your face and body continues up over your head, creating the environment where every single hair strand begins. Yet most of us treat it very differently from the rest of our skin.

We exfoliate our faces. We moisturize our skin. We protect it from buildup and congestion.

Our scalp? It usually gets shampoo and conditioner... and not much else.

Dermatologists often describe the scalp as one of the most active skin environments on the body. It contains tens of thousands of hair follicles and a high concentration of oil glands that work continuously to protect both the scalp and the hair shaft.

Like the rest of our skin, the scalp sheds cells, produces oil, responds to its environment, and benefits from proper care.

When the scalp becomes congested with excess oil, product buildup, dry shampoo, or environmental debris, the follicles can become weighed down. Hair may appear flat, dull, or harder to style. Sometimes the scalp itself may feel dry, tight, or irritated.

Think of the scalp like the soil in a garden. When the soil is clean, oxygenated, and balanced, plants grow beautifully. When it becomes compacted or congested, growth struggles.

Hair is no different.

### Why Scalp Care Is Trending

That realization has sparked a quiet movement in the beauty world: the rise of scalp care.

Across the country, salons are beginning to approach the scalp the same way skincare professionals approach the face.

Gentle exfoliation, cleansing, circulation stimulation, and hydration are becoming part of modern hair wellness.

The idea is simple. When the scalp is healthy, hair behaves better.

It feels lighter. It moves more naturally. It often appears fuller at the root because buildup is no longer weighing it down.

Many people are surprised to learn that scalp care can also influence how hair holds style or how long a blowout lasts. When follicles are clear and the scalp is balanced, hair tends to respond more predictably to styling.

### A Closer Look at the Scalp Spa

At b.LUXE Hair and Makeup Studio in Medway, this philosophy has inspired a growing interest in scalp-focused treatments.

Our Scalp Spa Experience begins with a look at the condition of the scalp itself. Just as an aesthetician studies skin before recommending a facial, stylists evaluate what the scalp needs at that moment. Some clients benefit from gentle exfoliation, while others need hydration or circulation-focused massage.

The treatment includes a detoxifying scalp scrub, nourishing oil application, massage, cleansing, and a professional blowout. It's designed to address a variety of concerns ranging from dry, itchy, or oily scalp to clogged follicles, irritation, and hair that feels weighed down.

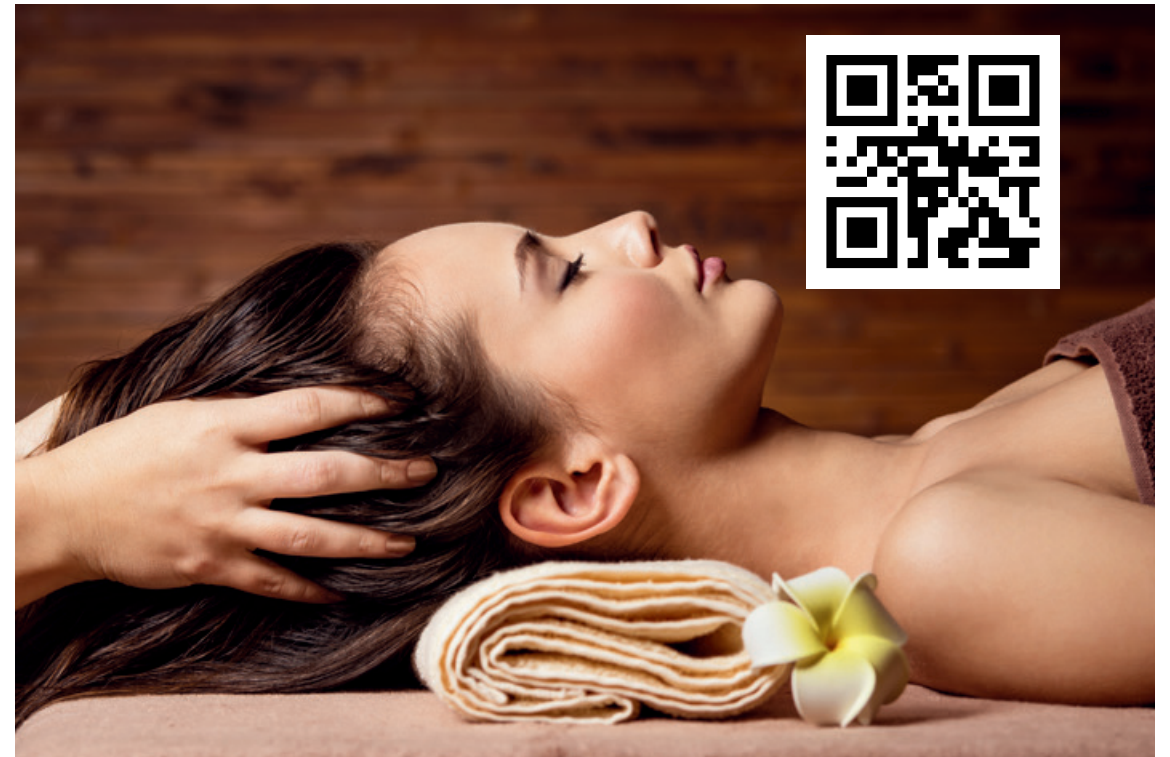
The goal is simple: restore balance.

Clients often describe the treatment as deeply relaxing, but the benefits go beyond relaxation. When the scalp is refreshed and clarified, the hair itself can feel noticeably different.

Lighter. Softer. More voluminous at the root.

The service concludes with a professional blow-dry, allowing clients to see just how well hair behaves when the scalp environment is reset.

What's interesting is that most people discover scalp care not because they were searching for it, but because they were trying



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ing to solve a hair problem. Hair that won't hold volume. Hair that feels heavy no matter what products are used. Hair that just doesn't seem to cooperate the way it once did.

Often, the answer isn't another styling product.

It's simply caring for the skin beneath it.

As more people begin to think of scalp health as part of overall hair wellness, this once overlooked area is finally getting the attention it deserves.

To help maintain results at home, b.LUXE also carries luxury scalp-care products from

Oribe and Kerasilk. These professional formulas are designed to gently exfoliate buildup, soothe irritation, and support the scalp's natural balance. When the scalp is treated with the same care as skin, the result is hair that feels lighter, healthier, and noticeably more vibrant.

Those curious about scalp health or wondering whether buildup, dryness, or irritation may be affecting their hair can speak with a stylist during a regular visit or consultation. Many people are often surprised to learn how much the condition of the scalp can influence the

way their hair looks and behaves.

After all, healthy hair doesn't begin at the ends.

It begins at the roots.

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# BEN for Franklin’s 4th Annual Jane Jacobs Walk in Downtown Franklin May 2

Event to Feature Regional Planning Leaders from CNU New England

will be provided at Franklin TV Studios following the walk  
Cost: Free and open to the public

Franklin, MA - Building Equitable Neighborhoods for Franklin (BEN for Franklin) will host its fourth annual Jane Jacobs Walk through downtown Franklin on Saturday, May 2, 2026, continuing a growing local tradition that invites residents to experience their community through a planning and design lens.

This year’s walk will be joined by planning professionals from Congress for the New Urbanism New England (CNU New England), bringing a regional perspective to the conversation around how Franklin’s downtown can continue to evolve as a vibrant, walkable, and connected place. Jane Jacobs Walks are held around the world each year in honor of urbanist Jane Jacobs, whose work emphasized the importance of people-centered design, active streets, and strong neighborhood fabric. The Franklin walk offers a chance for residents, local leaders, and visitors to explore downtown together, share observations, and discuss opportunities for thoughtful growth and improvement.

Participants will follow a guided route of approximately one mile through downtown, stopping at key locations to re-

flect on topics such as housing, public space, economic activity, and how different parts of

Franklin connect. The event is designed to be informal and accessible; no planning background is required. Wheels and furry friends are welcome. “The Jane Jacobs Walk offers a fantastic opportunity for neighbors to come together and observe their community from the ground up,” said Cobi Frongillo, BEN for Franklin co-founder. “Join us for a fun, informative walk and conversation!”

The inclusion of CNU New England members adds an additional layer to this year’s walk, offering insight from practitioners working across the region on similar challenges and opportunities.

Event Details:  
Date: Saturday, May 2, 2026  
Time: 10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.  
Location: Begins and ends at Franklin TV Studios  
Distance: Approximately 1 mile  
Post-Walk: Food and drinks

Accessibility: Wheels and furry friends are welcome

Residents, business owners, and anyone interested in the future of Franklin are encouraged to attend.

For more information, look for updates on [ben4franklin.org](http://ben4franklin.org).



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# Living Healthy

## Artificial Intelligence Is Transforming Eye Care

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

Artificial intelligence is rapidly transforming medicine, and ophthalmology is one of the fields experiencing its impact firsthand. For patients, this means eye diseases can be detected earlier, monitored more accurately, and treated more effectively. Although AI may sound futuristic, it is already integrated into clinics and hospitals, enhancing vision care and improving patient outcomes.

### The Complexity of the Human Eye

The human eye is an intricate organ. At its core is the retina, a thin tissue layer containing millions of light-sensitive cells that convert light into signals the brain interprets as vision. Because the retina's structures are microscopic and delicate, early disease detection can be challenging. Even experienced ophthalmologists rely on advanced imaging technologies to identify subtle abnormalities.

### AI as a Diagnostic Assistant

AI now assists doctors in analyzing these images in ways that were previously impossible. Sophisticated algorithms can review detailed scans of the retina and optic nerve, comparing them with thousands or even millions of other images. By recognizing patterns difficult for the human eye to detect, AI can help specialists identify early signs of disease, guiding faster and more accurate diagnoses. Importantly, AI does not replace physicians; it acts as a powerful assistant, helping ophthalmologists interpret complex data and make better-informed decisions.

### Early Detection of Eye Disease

One major benefit of AI in eye care is early detection. Many conditions, including diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, and age-related macular degeneration, can damage vision silently before patients notice symptoms.



By the time vision changes are apparent, disease may already be advanced. AI analyzes retinal images to detect subtle abnormalities that might otherwise go unnoticed. In some clinical settings, FDA-approved AI tools automatically screen for diabetic retinopathy, identifying patients who need specialist evaluation.

### Accuracy and Consistency in Monitoring

AI also enhances accuracy and consistency. Imaging technologies such as optical coherence tomography (OCT) generate

highly detailed three-dimensional retinal images, enabling specialists to examine microscopic layers of the eye. AI algorithms can measure retinal thickness, detect fluid accumulation, and monitor optic nerve health with remarkable precision. This reduces variability in interpretation and allows doctors to track even minimal changes over time, improving diagnosis and monitoring of glaucoma, diabetic eye disease, and macular degeneration.

### Predicting Disease Progression

Advanced AI tools can also predict disease progression. By analyzing large databases of retinal scans and patient outcomes, these systems estimate which patients are at higher risk of vision-threatening complications. Predictive insights allow physicians to intervene earlier and tailor treatments more effectively, shifting care from reactive to proactive.

### Expanding Access to Care

AI is expanding access to eye care as well. Tele-ophthalmology programs in rural or underserved areas enable patients to have retinal images captured locally, which are then analyzed using AI to determine who requires further specialist evaluation. This approach improves efficiency, reduces unnecessary travel, and ensures that serious conditions are not overlooked.

### AI in Surgical Planning

AI is influencing surgical care, particularly cataract surgery. Advanced algorithms analyze detailed eye measurements, assisting surgeons in selecting the optimal lens implant for each patient. These tools improve surgical planning and increase the likelihood of excellent postoperative vision. At Milford-Franklin Eye Center, we integrate AI and advanced technology to deliver high-quality care. Our state-of-the-art retinal imaging systems detect disease early and accurately, while multiple OCT scanners provide extraordinary detail of the retina and macula, aiding in the diagnosis and monitoring

of macular degeneration and diabetic eye disease.

### Milford-Franklin Eye Center and Technology

Every patient at Milford-Franklin Eye Center benefits from the highest level of our commitment to advanced technology. When it comes to glaucoma treatment, we were the first in the region to adopt the newest Direct SLT laser system, which uses advanced eye-tracking technology to track the eye during treatment and complete the procedure in about 1.2 seconds. Surgical care is equally advanced. Our accredited ambulatory surgery center in Milford was the first in the area to adopt the Unity cataract surgery system and offers laser-assisted cataract surgery. With our ORA system, we can verify lens implant power in real time during surgery to ensure the most precise visual results.

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### The AI Revolution and Commitment to the Community

Living in the communities we serve, we remain dedicated to advancing ophthalmology through technology, AI, and patient-centered care. From early detection to precise surgical interventions, artificial intelligence is transforming vision care and helping patients preserve sight, improve quality of life, and access the best care close to home.

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# Franklin Downtown Partnership Executive Director Celebrates 22 Years & Early Retirement

After 22 years of leading the Franklin Downtown Partnership (FDP), Executive Director Lisa Piana will be taking early retirement to spend more time with her family.

“I feel that this is the right time as the FDP celebrates its 25th Anniversary this year,” Piana said.

The FDP’s mission is to stimulate economic development in downtown in order to create a positive impact throughout the area, as well as to be a proactive organization that brings residents, business owners and community leaders together, encourages cooperation, and builds leadership to revitalize downtown Franklin.

Under Piana’s leadership the FDP member base has grown from 25 members to nearly 300 today.

Longtime FDP President, Scott Martin says, “Lisa has had a strong impact and is a passionate leader. She’s a strong advocate and has built relationships

with town council, administrators at both the town and state level, and with retailers. She always is thinking not only what’s



Lisa Piana

best for downtown, but what’s best for Franklin as a whole.”

“She is one of the most creative people I have worked with,” Martin adds. “Where there’s a challenge or opportunity, she doesn’t see just one solution. She can think of three or four differ-

ent angles. She sees opportunities everywhere.”

### Years of Collaboration

Piana’s first major project as Executive Director was working with Marini Construction who developed Franklin Commons and the building where Birchwood Bakery is located.

“It was really important to work with the developers early in their proposal so we could include green spaces in their planning,” Piana says. The FDP and the town convinced Marini to include the patio on Summer Street and on East Central Street, where the bakery now has outdoor seating.

Another early project was the design of the Historical Museum’s green space, including the straw-hat boy bronze sculpture, which reflects Franklin’s important history of manufacturing straw hats.

In 2021 Piana led downtown art mural projects in three separate alleyways by reaching out to

local artists from the Franklin Art Association. She is credited with creating The Ladybug Cultural & Historical Trail in the Cultural District in 2022, a good example of collaboration with FDP members. The committee consisted of Town Council members, Franklin Garden Club, Cultural District Committee, Franklin Art Association, and the Franklin Historical Museum.

Lisa has been involved in overseeing over 40 community events in her FDP tenure. Back in 2005, the signature events – Strawberry Stroll and Harvest

Festival – were small events with just a few hundred attendees. Today each event brings in close to 10,000 visitors from Franklin and surrounding towns.

Piana credits the “talented and generous people in Franklin” who have made these events possible. “Volunteers are the key to the FDP’s success throughout the years,” she explains.

“Lisa is very team-oriented,” says Michael Carroll, Senior Vice President, Marketing & Commu-

**RETIREMENT**  
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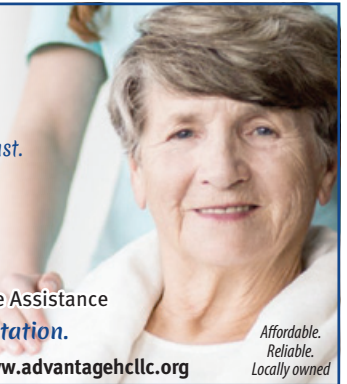
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RETIREMENT

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nications Officer at Dean Bank. “She’s always inclusive and collaborative, giving credit to the group rather than the individual ... I think any good leader does that.”

Under Piana’s leadership, the

FDP helped downtown businesses get through some challenging times including the major Streetscape project in 2016 and then COVID a few years later.

She points to her dedicated Board of Directors over the years for the many downtown successes. “Without the leadership of people like Scott Martin, FDP President, and Roberta Trahan,

FDP Vice President, we would not have been able to accomplish all that we have done. There are so many community leaders that have given hundreds of hours of their time. It’s what makes Franklin so special,” she says.

Reflecting Back

What is she most proud of? “One of the things I’m most

proud of is the collaboration that the FDP has with so many community leaders and organizations.” She explains, “I think when you have everyone working together for a common goal, that’s really how things get done. It’s rewarding to see projects completed year after year, and the goals become reality.”

The Franklin Downtown Partnership has worked to enable new businesses to open while supporting the established businesses. Shops are thriving due to shared promotions and events, networking, and strong social media. Downtown now has a dynamic mix of eateries, gift shops, pubs and entertainment.

Most clear is Piana’s passion for the downtown. “I love my job. I get to work with amazing leaders, volunteers, and small businesses. It has truly been a dream job,” she says.

Although the downtown has changed dramatically, Piana

explains Partnership’s goals have pretty much stayed the same. “We’re still focused on our mission to continue with the revitalization and economic development of the downtown. Every time we finish one project, another is presented to us. Our work is never done.”

Now is a good time to pass the baton, says Piana. “I’m excited to spend more time with my family, travel and restart my art career. I will stay involved. It is in my DNA,” she laughed.

Piana’s last day as Executive Director will be April 30th. She will remain on staff for the rest of the year to guide the new executive director and work on special projects. And she will continue to promote the downtown every chance she gets.

The Franklin Downtown Partnership, Inc. is a 501(c)3 organization. For more information go to [www.franklindowntownpartnership.org](http://www.franklindowntownpartnership.org).

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Easter Egg Hunt at Franklin UMC April 5th

The Franklin United Methodist Church (UMC) will host an Easter Egg Hunt for children (ages 0-10) on Sunday April 5th at their location at 82 W. Central Street in Franklin. The event is

BYOB (Bring your Own Basket), with designated hunt areas for different ages.

Tuesdays from 12-2 p.m., the FREE Community Closet is open at the church!

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# Mariel Ogle receives 2025 Carol Pizzi Scholarship

Mariel Ogle, a first-year student at UMass Amherst pursuing degrees in Linguistics and Biology, was the Carol Pizzi scholarship award recipient for 2025. In recognition of her exceptional academic performance, leadership, and genuine commitment to building stronger communities, the Franklin Democratic Town Committee was proud to select Mariel as this year's winner.

A graduate of Franklin High School, Ogle distinguished herself through both academic excellence and deep extracurricular involvement. Her high school

years were marked by meaningful contributions across a variety of honor societies, arts programs, and civic leadership initiatives.

Ogle's dedication to service and collective empowerment was reflected in her essay: "According to Google, the definition of a citizen is simply 'the inhabitant of a particular town or city.' But this definition does not take into account the true significance of citizenship in a community and the true impact that a strong sense of citizenship can bring. When people of a community feel a strong sense of citizenship and civic responsibility, it allows them to forge a community where others are uplifted, and individual adversity becomes that of the collective. Simply put, being a true citizen means being an active part of a community."

Each year, the Franklin Democratic Town Committee awards a \$1,000 scholarship to a deserving High School senior who has committed to attend college in the fall. The scholarship is funded annually from fundraising activities (such as the 4th of July concessions booth that the local Dems run).

The Carol A. Pizzi scholarship is named after beloved Franklin resident Carol A. (O'Connor) Pizzi, who passed away in 2010. To learn more and/or contribute, please visit [www.franklin-democrats.com](http://www.franklin-democrats.com).

For more information on the scholarship, students should inquire with their high school guidance office.



Mariel is pictured here with FDTC member Curtis Owens, who chairs the scholarship committee.

## FBRTC Present Celebrate Trails Day, April 25, 2026

Franklin, MA - Enjoy a brief walking tour on the Southern New England Trunkline Trail (SNETT). Learn the past history and plans for the future. A one-mile walk will be conducted on April 25 2026, starting at 12 p.m. (noon) at the Grove St Trail Head Parking Lot, 234 Grove St, Franklin.

Celebrate Trails Day is a nationwide event coordinated by Rails to Trails Conservancy (RTC). The RTC highlights the social, health, transportation, and economic benefits of connected trail networks across the United States. The Franklin & Bellingham Rail Trail Committee (FBRTC) will host a local celebration that includes a walk along the SNETT that emphasizes Franklin's unique railroad heritage, and the future economic and civic value of the SNETT in our area.

Activity 1: STARTS at Grove St Parking Lot: 12 p.m. (noon)  
An overview of the SNETT

history by Joe Landry and Scott Mason - train historians / hobbyists

Activity 2: 1/2 mile walk to the



Historic Wadsworth Homestead / Train Station

Brief talk by Joe Landry, Scott Mason, Sue Hehne & Sherine Hamade: MA DCR.

Activity 3: 1/2 mile return Walk Back to the Future to the Grove St trail head Guest Speakers: Local town, state and FBRTC representatives will take a look into the future SNETT extension into Downtown Franklin.

Come join us on Celebrate Trails Day on the SNETT!

Light snacks and refreshment will be provided.

[fbrtccommittee@gmail.com](mailto:fbrtccommittee@gmail.com)

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# Weymouth Food Pantry Wins 2nd Annual “SOUPer Bowl”

Weymouth & Franklin, MA – The Weymouth Food Pantry and the Franklin Food Pantry are proud to announce the results of their Second Annual SOUPer Bowl, a friendly competition to tackle hunger in their communities. In a massive show of community spirit, Weymouth Food Pantry claimed the top spot this year, collecting an incredible 9,600 cans of soup. The Franklin Food Pantry also scored big with supporters donating 6,286 cans.

Roy (Franklin) and State Rep. James Murphy (Weymouth) officially announced the winner at the Massachusetts State House, highlighting that in Massachusetts, 1 in 3 people are experiencing food insecurity.

Coming up, the 11th Annual Empty Bowls Dinner and Fundraiser will take place on Thursday, May 14, 2026, at 6 pm at Franklin Public High School. Tickets go on sale April 2nd. Visit [www.franklinfoodpantry.org](http://www.franklinfoodpantry.org). Interested in sponsoring the event? Please email Jen Johnson, Development Associate, at [jjohnson@franklinfoodpantry.org](mailto:jjohnson@franklinfoodpantry.org).

State Rep. Jeff



Members of the Franklin Girls' Basketball team joined in to collect soup for the 2026 SOUPer Bowl competition between Franklin and Weymouth food pantries.

# Franklin Residents to Run Boston Marathon

Boston, MA – On April 20, Jay Dieterle, Paul Fazio, Mark Hummel, and Tracey Vasile, from Franklin, Massachusetts, are running to defy cancer as a member of the Dana-Farber Marathon Challenge team in the 130th Boston Marathon® presented by Bank of America.

Also registered to run the Boston Marathon this year are Franklin residents Craig Brooks, Kim Chandler, Joseph Consigli, Brianna Cummings, Laura Dombroski, Megan Donnelly Bechwati, Paulo Dos Anjos, David Freedman, Jennifer Gaspar, Mike Hagen, Brendan Harrigan, Mikki Hayes, Nicole Leslie, Amanda Livingston, Justin Oconnell, Tiffany O'Connor, Kevin Ranahan, Samantha Sousa, Chris Towle, and Kevin Tuceri.

To contribute to the Dana-Farber Marathon Challenge, visit [RunDFMC.org](http://RunDFMC.org) or contact the Dana-Farber Marathon Challenge staff at (617) 632-1970 or [dfmc@dfci.harvard.edu](mailto:dfmc@dfci.harvard.edu). Follow DFMC on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/marathonchallenge](http://www.facebook.com/marathonchallenge).

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**TONY LAGRECA**  
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Sponsors



# Franklin LGBTQ Alliance April Events

**Pizza Night: Thurs., April 2nd, 6:30 -8:30 p.m.,** Franklin TV and Radio, 23 Hutchinson St., Franklin

Join the Franklin LGBTQ Alliance as we make our own personal pizzas! Gluten free, whole wheat, and vegan options will be available, ingredients provided. Pizzas will be cooked in the ovens at the radio station.

**Brunch with Non-Scene Friends: Sat., April 4th from 10 a.m.-12 p.m.,** Mak's Roast Beef 451 West Central St., Franklin

Join us as we eat great food and make new friends!

**Book Club: Wed., April 15th, 6:30-8:30 p.m.,** Franklin TV and Radio, 23 Hutchinson St., Franklin. This month we will be reading Gender Euphoria: Stories of Joy from Trans, Non-Binary, and Intersex Writers by Laura Kate Dale.

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# April 2026 Calendar

## April 1

**Franklin Art Association meeting, 6:30 p.m.,** Franklin Senior Center, 10 Daniel McCahill St., Franklin, guest artist Anne Wert

## April 2

**Franklin LGBTQ Alliance pizza night, 6:30-8:30 p.m.,** Franklin TV & Radio, 23 Hutchinson St., Franklin, make personal pizzas, ingredients provided, gluten-free & vegan options included

## April 3

**Franklin Recreation presents Peter Cottontail's Eggcellent Adventure, 10 a.m.,** Franklin's Beaver Pond, 450 Beaver St., Franklin, egg hunt and face-painting, space limited, register at <https://franklinma.myrec.com>.

## April 4

**Franklin LGBTQ Alliance Brunch with Non-Scene Friends, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.,** Mak's Roast Beef 451 West Central St., Franklin

## April 5

**Easter Egg Hunt, 11:15 a.m.,** Franklin United Methodist Church, 82 W. Central St., Franklin, bring your own basket, for ages 0-10 with designated hunt areas for different ages

## April 7

**Community Closet open, 12-2 p.m.,** Franklin United Methodist Church, 82 W. Central St., Franklin. Secondhand clothing FREE to community.

**Rotary Club of Franklin, MA meeting, 5:30 p.m.,** Rome Restaurant, 4 E. Central St., Franklin. If you would like to come to a meeting, email Diane Padula, [dmpadula@deanbank.com](mailto:dmpadula@deanbank.com).

**Voice of Franklin Toastmasters, 7:30 p.m.,** Franklin TV, 23 Hutchinson St., Franklin, work on your presentation skills with a supportive group in Zoom or in person, <https://voiceoffranklin.toastmastersclubs.org>

**FHS Chamber Concert, 7 p.m.,** Franklin High School, 218 Oak St., Franklin

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

## April 11

**Opening of exhibit: Quattro Eroi Lodge 1414,** the Franklin-based local entity of the Order Sons and Daughters of Italy, Celebrates 100 years, Franklin Historical Museum, 80 W. Central St., Franklin

**Vance Gilbert, 7:30 p.m.,** Circle of Friends Coffeehouse, Franklin's First Universalist Society meetinghouse, 262 Chestnut St., Franklin, [www.circlefolk.org](http://www.circlefolk.org)

**Bellingham Business Expo, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.,** Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham

## April 12

**Second Sunday Speaker Series presents author and historian Stephen Puleo, 1 p.m.,** event in conjunction with 100th anniversary events for Quattro Eroi Lodge 1414, the Franklin-based local entity of the Order Sons and Daughters of Italy.

## April 14

**Community Closet open, 12-2 p.m.,** Franklin United Methodist Church, 82 W. Central St., Franklin. Secondhand clothing FREE to community.

**Stony Brook Camera Club meeting, 7:30 p.m.,** Zoom, "Black and White Photography" with Silvanna Della Camera, visit [stonybrookcc.com](http://stonybrookcc.com) for more info.

## April 15

**Franklin LGBTQ Alliance Book Club, 6:30-8:30 p.m.,** Franklin TV and Radio, 23 Hutchinson St., Franklin. Gender Euphoria: Stories of Joy from Trans, Non-Binary, and Intersex Writers by Laura Kate Dale.

## April 17

**Franklin Library Book Sale, 1 – 5 p.m.,** Franklin Public Library, 118 Main St., Franklin, All books \$1

## April 18

**Franklin Earth Day Clean up Event, 9 a.m.-12 p.m.,** Beaver Pond. register at <https://franklinma.myrec.com>.

**Franklin Library Book Sale, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.,** Franklin Public Library, 118 Main St., Franklin, All books \$1, bag sale 1-4 p.m., \$5 per paper bag

## April 21

**Community Closet open, 12-2 p.m.,** Franklin United Methodist Church, 82 W. Central St., Franklin. Secondhand clothing FREE to community.

**Rotary Club of Franklin, MA meeting, 5:30 p.m.,** Rome Restaurant, 4 E. Central St., Franklin. If you would like to come to a meeting, email Diane Padula, [dmpadula@deanbank.com](mailto:dmpadula@deanbank.com).

**Voice of Franklin Toastmasters, 7:30 p.m.,** Franklin TV, 23 Hutchinson St., Franklin, work on your presentation skills with a supportive group in Zoom or in person, <https://voiceoffranklin.toastmastersclubs.org>

**Stony Brook Camera Club meeting, 7:30 p.m.,** Zoom, "The Art of Photographing Trees and Woods" with Mark Bowie, visit [stonybrookcc.com](http://stonybrookcc.com) for more info.

## April 25

**4th Annual Ladybug Trail Spring Walk, self-guided walk as early as 9 a.m.,** search for fiberglass ladybug sculptures connecting approximately 25 historical and cultural sites. Ladybug-themed activities at Dean College, Franklin Public Library, Franklin Historical Museum and The Children's Museum of Franklin. Maps at Franklin Historical Museum, Franklin Public Library, Ferrara's Market or The Little Shop of Olive Oils. Rain date 4/26

**Franklin Bellingham Rail Trail Committee Celebrate Trails Day, 12 p.m.,** 1-mile walk of Southern New England Trunkline Trail (SNETT) starting at Grove St. parking lot of Franklin Bellingham Rail Trail in Franklin. Event includes overview of the SNETT history by Joe Landry and Scott Mason, 1/2 mile walk to the Historic Wadsworth Homestead /Train Station with a brief talk by Joe Landry, Scott Mason, Sue Hehne & Sherine Hamade: MA DCR, and a 1/2 mile return Walk Back to the Future to the Grove St trail head as local town, state and FBRTC representatives discuss the future SNETT extension into Downtown Franklin. [fbrtccommittee@gmail.com](mailto:fbrtccommittee@gmail.com)

**Norfolk Public Library 2026 Annual Book Sale, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.,** Freeman-Kennedy School, 70 Boardman St., Norfolk

**Boston Typewriter Orchestra Concert, 2 p.m.,** Franklin Public Library, 118 Main St., Franklin. Funded by Franklin Cultural Council, which is funded by Mass. Cultural Council

**Electronics Recycling Day, 8 a.m.-12 p.m.,** First Congregational Church of Milford, 4 Congress St., Milford, items \$5-\$45 to recycle, no charge for cell phones, hard drives wiped no additional charge

## April 26

**Moving from Grief to Justice, 10 a.m.,** The First Universalist Society in Franklin (FUSF), 262 Chestnut Street, Franklin

## April 28

**Community Closet open, 12-2 p.m.,** Franklin United Methodist Church, 82 W. Central St., Franklin. Secondhand clothing FREE to community.

**Stony Brook Camera Club meeting, 7:30 p.m.,** Zoom, New Member Showcase, visit [stonybrookcc.com](http://stonybrookcc.com) for more info.

## April 30

**Tri-County Health Fair, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.,** Franklin Senior Center, 10 Daniel McCahill St., Franklin, students to provide free screenings

**STORMWARN Spotter Training with NOAA, 6 p.m.,** Franklin Public Library, 118 Main St., Franklin

## May 2

**BEN for Franklin to Host 4th Annual Jane Jacobs Walk, 10:30 a.m.-12 p.m.,** ~1-mile walk begins and ends at Franklin TV & Radio, 23 Hutchinson St., Franklin, guests from New Urbanism New England, food and drink available, wheels and furry friends welcome

**Horace Mann Weekend at Franklin Historical Museum, May 2 &3,** more details at <https://www.franklinmuseum1778.org>

**Bellingham Operation Graduation Spring Vendor & Craft Fair, 10 a.m.- 2 p.m.,** Bellingham Memorial School Athletic Fields, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham

**Charles River Chorale Spring Concert, 5 p.m.,** Medway High School, 88 Summer St., Medway, <https://our.show/crcspringconcert>



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# Sports

## Vera Hansen Hopes to Push Franklin Girls' Lacrosse to Tourney

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,  
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Having grown up playing soccer her entire life, Franklin's Vera Hansen decided, as she entered her senior year, that it was time to put the soccer ball into the closet and leave it there, solely focusing on her lacrosse career.

Lacrosse was not anything new to the Panther senior. She began playing the sport back in the first grade. At the time, her older sister and brother were participating in the sport, and although she was still kicking the soccer ball around, her brother inspired her to pick up a lacrosse stick. She quickly found she enjoyed the sport, and, with her dad alongside coaching, she felt in a peaceful place.

Eventually, her older sister would drop lacrosse for dance, but her brother continued playing the sport. When he signed to play at Quinnipiac University, Hansen thought that the concept was something into which she could get into.

"When he signed to play Division 1 lacrosse, I thought that it was the coolest thing and wanted to follow in his footsteps," she said. "I looked up to my siblings my whole life and wanted more than anything to be like them."

Hansen was able to follow her brother and has committed to play Division 1 lacrosse at Merrimac College in North Andover, where she will play defense for the Warriors.

"While I play midfield in high school, I will be playing defense in college," she said.

When she enters college in the fall, the athlete will be looking to make an impact on the team but knows that she is a freshman and in reality will not get too much playing time.

"I know that as a freshman playing for a Division 1 program that it is going to be tough to get onto the field," Hansen said, "... if it doesn't happen at first I will not be concerned. I am here in a new environment and looking to make new friends."

It was around eighth grade when Hansen realized that she had a talent for lacrosse. That year, she had joined Gold Star



**Committed to play Division 1 lacrosse for Merrimac College in the fall, FHS senior Vera Hansen is focused on helping her team win a fourth Hockomock title in a row and getting her team to post-season play.**

Lacrosse, a club team headed by Franklin Head Coach Kristin Igoe Guarino. The Coach felt the young lacrosse player could become a star.

"Coach Kristin knew my skills coming in, so that took a lot of stress off of me during (high school) tryouts," Hansen said, "I made the varsity team, but having seven seniors who would go on to play Division 1 lacrosse, I would be playing defense that year. It was ok, because I was pushed to play at a higher level."

When all the seniors graduated, Hansen was moved back to midfield, a position she was comfortable with, although she had to relearn the position on the varsity level. Playing midfield on the youth level was not anywhere near as intense as playing it for the high school.

"I knew all the basics of the position, but I didn't have the mindset," Hansen said. "I was able to learn pretty quick, especially with Coach Kristin helping me."

Igoe Guarino noted that the four-year varsity athlete has definitely grown into her Panthers position over the years.

"Vera has worked extremely hard to become an impact player for us, playing all over the field. She is fast, has a high lacrosse IQ and has developed into one of our top threats on offense with her dodging and feeding abilities,

the Panther Coach said, "Vera started as a low defender for us but has made a lot of improvements in her stickwork and just overall confidence with the ball. Now, she plays more midfield, and even some attack, since she is such a threat with the ball. She has learned how to dodge hard to goal in many different ways."

While Hansen is able to put the ball into the back of the net on a regular basis, she doesn't consider herself a leading goal scorer for the Panthers.

"I can score a good amount,

but I consider myself more of an assist individual," she said, "I like to cut through defenders and get the ball to my teammates who can score, and I am perfectly fine with that. If need be, I'll shoot, but if someone else has a better chance, I'll get it to them."

Last spring as a junior, Hansen suffered a bad ankle sprain and was forced to miss time on the field, but this year she feels 100% and is ready to go out and be the best version of herself that she can be for Franklin, while pushing herself to get ready for

her next endeavor – college.

Although she is looking to improve upon her game for the next chapter of her life, Hansen is, more importantly, focused on the Franklin team before she departs, hoping to again help the Panthers win the Hockomock League, like the past three years.

In addition to another Hock Title, Hansen wants to get the team further into the playoffs. Last spring, the Panthers, who were 16-2, earned themselves a number seven seed in the Division 1 Tournament where they defeated Weymouth 21-7 in the first round, but were upset by Andover in the next round 7-3.

The senior midfielder believes the team has a strong upper class with some talented underclassmen who can advance the team into the post-season this year. The Coach sees a bright athlete that should be able to push her team to success.

"She is turning into a strong leader both on and off the field, and I am looking for her to have a great season, where we will expect a lot from her," Igoe Guarino said. "With her speed, she might need to be on the draw circle and help us win possession. We will also look to her to be a leader on settled offense and defense, which means communication and making sure everyone is working together."

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# Franklin Public Library April Highlights

## Access The Boston Globe with Your Library Card

Franklin Public Library, through its Minuteman Library Network membership, now provides free, unlimited access to BostonGlobe.com to resident cardholders of all member libraries through a 72-hour access pass, for up to 500 users at a time. Enter your library card number, then follow-up the steps to create or login with a BostonGlobe.com account.

**2026 Reading Challenge April:** A Short Story or Essay Collection Looking for a way to expand your reading habits this year? Join the Massachusetts Center for the Book 2026 Reading Challenge for adults, and the library will reward your reading with a coupon for a free book from our book sale! Learn more at <https://www.franklinma.gov/261/Reading-Challenges-Book-Groups>.

**VITA: Volunteer Income Tax Assistance, Saturdays, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.; Last Day April 11**

It's tax season, and volunteers at Franklin Public Library are here to help! If you made \$67k or less as a household in 2025, have a disability, or limited English, our volunteers are prepared to work with you to file your federal and state taxes for free. Be sure to bring all of your tax documents (such as W-2, 1099s, 1099HC, etc.), valid government issued photo ID, and social security cards (photocopies and previous returns accepted). Learn more about the VITA program and what documents you need at [www.irs.gov/individuals/irs-tax-volunteers](http://www.irs.gov/individuals/irs-tax-volunteers) or email site coordinator Mitzi Gousie at [mgousie@minlib.net](mailto:mgousie@minlib.net).

## Special Events for Adults

**STORMWARN Spotter Training with NOAA, Thursday, April 30 @ 6pm** To obtain critical weather information, the National Weather Service (NWS) established SKYWARN®. SKYWARN® is a volunteer program with between 350,000 and 400,000 trained severe weather spotters. Learn

how to become one of these volunteers who help keep their local communities safe by providing timely and accurate reports of severe weather to the National Weather Service.

## Special Events for All Ages

**Boston Typewriter Orchestra Concert, Saturday, April 25 @ 2pm** It's time for a different type of music in a whole new key! The Boston Typewriter Orchestra (BTO) is a collective performance of rhythmic typewriter manipulation. Enjoy music, comedy, and satire while exploring the definition of 'musical instrument'. Funding for this program is provided by The Franklin Cultural District, a local agency funded by Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

## Franklin Library Book Sale

Friday, April 17: 1 – 5 p.m. and Saturday, April 18: 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. All books \$1. Bag Sale - \$5 Per Bag, Sat-

urday, April 18: 1 - 4pm

## Special Events for Kids & Teens

**Science Night, Wednesday, April 1 @ 5:30 p.m.**

**Eid Celebration, April 4 @ 1 p.m.**, For families, complete with crafts, music, snacks, and more! For questions/to get involved, email Caleigh at [ckeating@minlib.net](mailto:ckeating@minlib.net)!

**Poem Explosion, Thursday, April 16 @ 1 p.m.** Calling all poets! Join us as we make poems from cut out magazines, old book pages, and even book spines!

**Music At The Blissful, Saturday, April 18 @ 10:30 a.m.** Musician Evan Haller brings the energy to get the whole crowd up and dancing!

**Local Hero Storytime, Tuesday, April 21 @10:30a.m.** Our friends from Franklin Fire Department join us for a special story time celebrating our local heroes!

**Superhero Party, Wednesday, April 22 @10:30 a.m.** Feel free to wear your favorite superhero outfit and join us for a series of games, crafts, and hero activities!

**Stuffed Animal Sleepover, Wednesday, April 22 @6 p.m.** Bring one of your favorite stuffed friends to the library for a cozy Storytime, then leave them in our care for the evening! At pickup on Thursday, see what antics they might have caused!

**BenAnna Band, Thursday, April 23 @10:30 a.m.** A high-energy, interactive music concert!

**Ed Popielarczyk Magic Show, Friday, April 24 @10:30 a.m.** Ed Popielarczyk presents a one-of-a-kind magic show guaranteed to leave the whole family impressed!

**Rainforest Reptiles, Saturday, April 25 @10:30 a.m.** Real, LIVE Animal Fun for All Ages!

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# FHS Freshman Wins 3rd Place in Poetry Out Loud State Final

Franklin, MA - Franklin High School is proud to share that freshman Marina Zaki recently won third place at the Poetry Out Loud state final.

Poetry Out Loud is a national arts education program that encourages the study of poetry through a recitation competition for high school students. Participants memorize and recite poems selected from the Poetry Out Loud database and are judged based on their physical presence, voice and articulation, interpretation, evidence of understanding and overall performance.

On March 8, Marina competed against students from 48 other schools across Massachusetts. She performed "The New Colossus" by



Franklin High School 9th grader Marina Zaki, left, earned 3rd place in the state's Poetry Out Loud competition. (Photo Courtesy Franklin Public Schools)

Emma Lazarus, "My Grandmother's Love Letters" by Hart Crane and "My Papa's Waltz" by Theodore Roethke, ending her competitive run with a third-place finish.

# Temple Etz Chaim Holds Comedy Fundraiser

Ariel Elias from NYC was the headliner, opened up by comedian Shane Olesen, former employee of Longhorn in Franklin, for a comedy fundraiser for Franklin's Temple Etz Chaim held at the Portuguese Club in Milford last month. The event, which welcomed over 125 guests, with auction items and food, raised over \$9,000. Funds raised will benefit the temple community as well as the local Jewish community. Temple Etz Chaim is also involved in helping the Franklin Food Pantry, Interfaith Council of Franklin and has supported many local organizations.



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## Coming Up at Franklin Senior Center

The Franklin Senior Center is located at 10 Daniel McCall St., Franklin. Reach them at (508) 520-4945.

**Thursday, April 2**  
Sing-along with Tom, 10:30 a.m.

**Monday, April 6**  
Page Turners Book Club, 11 a.m., The Book of Lost Names, by Kristin Harmel  
Musical Baseball, 1 p.m., Performing a unique, interactive and highly entertaining program, local singer-songwriter (and former sportswriter) Howie Newman will sing baseball songs, offer up baseball trivia and tell stories about his days as a sportswriter on the Red Sox beat.

**Wednesday, April 8**  
Have the Last Say: How to Write your Own Obituary, Session 1, 11 a.m., with Nurse Trish

**Friday, April 10**  
Monthly Party; "Spring Picnic," 11 a.m. – 1 p.m., \$10

**Tuesday, April 14**  
Lunch & Learn: Seniors Helping Seniors Collaborating with the Parkinson's Foundation, Noon

**Wednesday, April 15**  
Memory Café, Charles Meadow sponsoring, 1 p.m.

**Thursday, April 16**  
Painting with Amy, 1 p.m.

**Friday, April 17**  
Franklin Food Pantry No Bowl Empty Pottery Class, make a bowl for the May 14th Empty Bowls Dinner at FHS, 3:30 p.m., Tickets include: the bowl making event, the finished glazed bowl, and a ticket to the Empty Bowls Dinner on May 14th. Adults: \$30; Children: \$20

**Tuesday, April 21**  
Perkins Library, 1 p.m., Erin Fragola is the Outreach Manager at Perkins Library in Watertown, the Regional NLS Library serving Massachusetts will focus on information and access for folks with low vision.

**Wednesday, April 22**  
Have the Last Say: How to Write your Own Obituary, Session 2, 11 a.m., with Nurse Trish

**Thursday, April 23**  
Kathy's Art Class, 1 p.m., \$3  
Charm Medical Supplies & Med Minder Pharmacy, 1 p.m.  
GATRA Public meeting, 2:30 p.m.  
Pizza & Movie Night, 4 p.m.,

Springsteen: Deliver Me from Nowhere, \$5

**Friday, April 24**  
Meteorology, 1 p.m., with Meteorologist Kevin Lemano-wicz

**Monday, April 27**  
50+ Job Seekers, 1:30 p.m., Connecting the Dots - Using Networking

**Tuesday, April 28**  
What is Probate?, 1 p.m.  
Drum Circle, 1:30 p.m.

**Thursday, April 30**  
Tri-County Health Fair, 10 a.m.- 1 p.m., Tri-County Medical Assisting students will host a wellness-focused community health fair with free blood pressure, heart rate, and O2 level screenings.  
Wind Chime Craft, 1 p.m.

**Friday, May 1**  
Eat Around the World: Denmark, 11 a.m., \$10

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## FUSF Presents "Moving from Grief to Justice" April 26, 10 a.m.

In a world where devastation is palpable every day, it is often difficult not to default to despair and fear. Though this despair is so present, there is hope in letting yourself grieve. Join Rev Jo Murphy, Executive Director for UU Mass Action, in investigating the importance of not defaulting to fear and despair, but to find space to grieve. She will explore moving from grief to justice work, finding joy and wonder in it all, sustaining ourselves and our communities.

The First Universalist Society in Franklin (FUSF) is a Unitarian Universalist Welcoming Congregation located at 262 Chestnut Street, Franklin. Our Minister is Reverend Beverly Waring. For more information about FUSF please visit our website at Fusf.org. You can also contact us at info@fusf.org or by calling (508)528-5348.



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