

Milford High School building project advances with design team in place

Design options expected to be finalized in June

By Theresa Knapp

The Milford High School Building Committee has selected HMFH Architects as the design firm for the town's high school project, marking a key step forward in the planning process.

At its March 18 meeting, the committee heard an update from project architect Stephanie MacNeil, who outlined ongoing efforts to assess the school's current layout and future needs. The design team has been conducting site visits, meeting with teachers and department heads, and touring comparable schools, including facilities in Attleboro, Weymouth, and the Bristol-



**SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE - MARCH 18TH, 2026
OWNER PROJECT MANAGER UPDATE**

Milford High School Building Committee's Owner Project Manager (OPM) James Riefstahl, left, and HMFH Architects' Stephanie MacNeil who was providing a design update to the committee at its March 18 meeting. Source: MilfordTV

Plymouth Regional Technical School.

"These early months are

DESIGN TEAM

continued on page 3

MHS senior awarded Lions Club Young Ambassador

Avalina DiGiallonardo ('26) selected to represent District 33A

Avalina DiGiallonardo, Milford High School Class of 2026, was recently awarded the prestigious Lions Club District 33A 21st Century Young Ambassador Award. DiGiallonardo was selected for this award amongst the nominees from the 49 Central Massachusetts Lions Clubs that comprise District 33A. She received this honor at the Lions Club Regional meeting on Feb. 21 in Southbridge.

The 21st Century Young Ambassador Award is presented by local area Lions Clubs for "outstanding accomplishments in the areas of community service, leadership, and scholastic achievements."

DiGiallonardo is passionate about inclusion and Special Education. She has completed



Avalina DiGiallonardo, Milford High School Class of 2026, receives the Lions Club District 33A 21st Century Young Ambassador Award. Courtesy photo

AMBASSADOR

continued on page 3

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MHS students named Special Olympics 'Jersey Mike's' ambassadors

Milford High School students Trevor Dupre and Miguel Herpin-Hernandez were recently selected as Massachusetts' Special Olympics Jersey Mike's Ambassadors during Jersey Mike's "Month of Giving" fundraising event during the month of March.

In their role, Dupre and Herpin-Hernandez helped to create excitement and enhance partnerships with Jersey Mike's as part of the company's efforts to support the Special Olympics. They visited local Jersey Mike's, met with staff and customers, and raised awareness about the Special Olympics in Massachusetts. They also shared the importance of inclusion and community as competitive athletes in the upcoming Special Olympic games.

Special Olympics is the 2026 beneficiary of Jersey Mike's Month of Giving, which took place on March 25; on that date,



Trevor Dupre and Miguel Herpin-Hernandez have been named Special Olympics Jersey Mike's Ambassadors. Courtesy photo

all its restaurants in the U.S. and Canada donated 100 percent of sales to support the Special Olympics.

Food truck bylaw, oversight in the works

By Theresa Knapp

Milford officials have been meeting in hopes of amending its zoning bylaws to allow food trucks to operate in town.

At a Planning Board meeting on March 17, member Christopher Wilson said Planning Board members are working with the Board of Health, Town Engineer, Town Planner, and Building Commissioner on the issue.

"We are hoping to try to develop some language to try to allow food trucks at Celebrate Milford, at car shows, and maybe any other events," said Wilson.

The original intent was to present a bylaw amendment at the Annual Town Meeting, but it will be pushed to fall Town Meeting.

"What originally started as something simple got more and more complex," said Wilson. "Ultimately, we're still working on it, we're still looking at trying to finish this up as soon as possible but...it doesn't look like we'll be able to make it to this [May] Town Meeting. We just don't have enough time to

really clarify the language, present it to the Select Board, get the public hearing in line, and move it through. We'll push for the fall."

Planning Board member Joseph A. Calagione suggested food truck oversight should not fall within zoning bylaws, but should be a town regulation under the purview of the Select Board.

"I don't think we should be regulating it," said Calagione. "The only reason it got put into the zoning, my recollection, was to stop people from bringing food trucks into the Town of Milford, it was the easiest place to do it. But, if we're now going to allow them, and try to control them, I really think it should just be a town bylaw not a zoning bylaw and get it out of the Planning Board totally - that isn't something that we monitor or do."

Wilson said town officials are still working through where the control should rest for food trucks.

To watch the full meeting, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H2GvaX5IL9Y>.

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Fishing Derby on May 9, prizes for all



Vinnie Velastro, a member of the Knights of Columbus Valencia Council #80 in Milford, with a previous fishing derby winner. Velastro is the organizer of this annual event. Courtesy photo

The Knights of Columbus Valencia Council #80 in Milford will be holding its Annual Fishing Derby on Saturday, May 9, at Louisa Lake in Milford from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. The event is open to boys and girls ages 5 to 15 in Milford and surrounding communities rain or shine. Registration begins at 8 a.m.

There is no cost for this event. Prizes will be awarded to all participants. Refreshments will be served.

For more information, please contact Jim Monahan, Deputy Grand Knight, Knights of Columbus Valencia Council #80 at 508-904-1522 or jmonahanjr41@outlook.com.

DESIGN TEAM

continued from page 1

focused on gathering existing conditions data and understanding how the school operates,” MacNeil said, noting the goal is to align educational programming with building design.

The project remains in its early planning stages and HMFH is expected to present its final report at the committee’s meeting on June 16.

MacNeil said February through June is dedicated to research, visioning, and developing potential design options. By May, the committee will review a range of configurations, including new construction, renovation, or a combination of both, which will guide the architects’ final recommendations.

One major decision still under consideration is grade configuration.

Committee chair Jonathan Bruce said, “The original statement of interest was for either a [grades] 9 through 12 or an 8 through 12; then we asked about the possibility of looking at a 7 through 12 school, and because we asked the question during eligibility, that’s now baked in as far as looking at it - it doesn’t mean we can or should or would build it but we are committed to looking at it from a global perspective. At the end of the day, it’s probably good information to have... Whether we do it or not is a whole different discussion for a different time.”

The Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) requires the committee to narrow the options to three by early June. From there, a final preferred plan will be selected and submitted for approval later that month.

Bruce said, “At the end of the day it’s going to be up to

the school department and the building committee to present on town meeting floor why this makes sense. We’re going to be the ones closest to the ground on it, that understand what the options are: whether it’s new school, demo, add/reno, reno, 8-12, 7-12 – don’t forget, there’s still PreK here - what are we going to do with Admin. Our job is to filter that down into something that’s digestible in an hour presentation to Town Meeting.”

Current projections target a school opening in September 2031, though committee members expressed interest in completing the project sooner if possible. “The sooner the better,” said Bruce.

The full meeting is available for viewing on Milford TV.

Project documents and information can be found at <https://www.milfordpublicschools.com/about/mhs-school-building-project>.

AMBASSADOR

continued from page 1

hundreds of hours of community service through Special Olympics, Unified Sports, and Best Buddies. She has also been an active fundraiser for the Polar Plunge held at MHS last March in support of Special Olympics. She is Vice President for the MHS Best Buddies program, and this past summer attended the Best Buddies leadership conference at Indiana University. DiGiallonardo is also a varsity athlete and Honor Roll student at MHS. Following graduation, she will enroll at Westfield

State University, with a major in Special Education while playing lacrosse.

“Avalina is an exceptional student leader. As Vice President of Best Buddies, she has devoted countless hours to volunteering to individuals with intellectual disabilities and actively participates in multiple Unified Sports and Special Olympics programs, building meaningful connections through teamwork and compassion,” said Special education Teacher and Best Buddies Advisor Dr. Lexi Forgit. “Her passion, kindness, and unwavering commitment to uplifting others makes her an inspiring role model for everyone. Avalina is an

outstanding young woman whose enthusiasm to promote inclusion of individuals with intellectual disabilities has greatly improved our school community.”

Milford High School Principal, Dr. Josh Otlin, shared, “Avalina is an extraordinary leader and we are so pleased to see the Lions Club recognize and honor her. She has already made a tremendous impact at a very young age and I have no doubt that her contributions to our society will only grow as she comes into adulthood. We are deeply proud of Avalina and thankful for the inspiration she provides to everyone who has the privilege of knowing her.”

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'Soccer's Big Event' is coming to 'Boston Stadium'

Two million people will be looking for things to do in surrounding towns

By Theresa Knapp

Editor's note: Due to copyright issues, the more commonly known name for the football/soccer matches cannot be used by publications outside of the official association. We are calling it "Soccer's Big Event."

The most popular sport in the world is football (or "soccer" in the U.S.) and this year several matches of the global soccer tournament – or "Soccer's Big Event" – will be played in June and July in Massachusetts.

Boston is one of 16 cities across North America that will host matches. Specific dates

for the Boston area will be announced closer to the event, but will be between June 13 and July 9.

At a recent Tourism Summit and Legislative Breakfast hosted by the MetroWest Boston Visitors Bureau, state and local officials explained how Massachusetts is preparing for the event.

The main speaker at the conference was Greta Teller of "Bostonfwc26," the group that is overseeing local logistics for the world organization. She said there are many ways MetroWest communities can provide experiences for the millions of visitors who are expected to flood the area.

"Two million people are coming, and there are only 740,000 tickets," Teller said. "And many of those people are coming without tickets and will need things to do."

There are opportunities for communities all around Eastern Massachusetts, and beyond, to join in the festivities and revelry, Teller said, adding fans just want to be in Massachusetts to support their team, which is an opportunity for local fan festivals, fan marches, fan zones, pep rallies, watch parties, and more.

The event, Teller said, will provide a significant boost to hotels, restaurants and other local businesses; and the Bostonfwc is encouraging towns to organize fan festivals and cultural celebrations in the area, and to promote those events through the organization's website and the MWVB (for free).

At the summit, it was noted

that MetroWest has the largest population of Brazilians outside of Brazil, Brockton has the largest Cape Verde population outside of Cape Verde, and Worcester is home to a large Ghana population – all of which can be a consideration when organizing activities around Soccer's Big Event.

MetroWest Visitors Bureau Executive Director Stacey David said local towns and organizations should think about experiences visitors might enjoy and market them accordingly – anything related to arts, culture, living history, outdoor activities (trail systems) – will be a big draw.

"Think about what you have in your town, and let the MetroWest Visitors Bureau help promote it," said David.

However, the very first action anyone should take, she said, is to change all website references from "Gillette Stadium" to "Boston Stadium," which is what the world will be searching for when looking for things to do in the area.

When creating watch parties and other events, organizers should consult the organization's public viewing regulations, including broadcast licenses, branding, etc., which can be found at <https://bit.ly/FIFA-publicViewing>.

Sen. Becca Rausch, whose district includes Milford – just 20 miles from Foxboro where the matches will be played – attended the event and said the Commonwealth is ready to welcome visitors from around the world.

"I'm thrilled [Soccer's Big



"Soccer's Big Event" is coming to "Boston Stadium" in June and July. Image created by Theresa Knapp using ChapGPT

Event] is coming to Massachusetts and particularly our region, drawing millions of visitors to MetroWest this summer. Travelers have so much to discover here, from beautiful nature trails to dynamic main streets and cultural treasures. I hope people are excited for the opportunity to welcome the world and showcase our hospitality and history, especially as we celebrate and share the stories of MA250. I stand with my colleague, Sen. Paul Feeney, as he leads the work in the Senate to secure funding for a safe and smooth experience for tourists and residents alike," Sen. Rausch told *Milford Free Press*, after the event.

The MetroWest Boston Visitors Bureau promotes travel and tourism throughout the 19 towns of the MetroWest region,

Many visitors know they will not get a ticket but they want to be in Massachusetts to support their team, which is an opportunity for local fan festivals, fan marches, pep rallies, watch parties, and more.

~Greta Teller, Bostonfwc26
<https://bostonfwc26.com>

which include Ashland, Bellingham, Framingham, Franklin, Holliston, Hopedale, Hopkinton, Hudson, Marlborough, Medway, Milford, Millis, Natick, Northborough, Sherborn, Southborough, Sudbury, Wayland, and Westborough, according to www.metrowestvisitors.org

For more information, visit www.fifa.com or <https://bostonfwc26.com>

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Risks Threatening Gen Z's Retirement — and How to Tackle Them



Mark Freeman, CEPA

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While older generations worry about having enough money for retirement, many Gen Z workers aren't even starting to save. Research in 2025 by Edward Jones and Morning Consult shows that nearly half haven't begun setting money aside for their golden years, and only 22% are contributing to a workplace retirement plan.

The culprit is a perfect storm of financial pressures that can make saving for the future feel impossible.

One of the biggest challenges this generation faces is debt. High-interest credit card balances and persistent student loan payments leave many feeling they're just trying to stay afloat, rather than planning decades ahead.

The cost of living doesn't help either. Nearly 60% of Gen Z renters are considered "rent-burdened," spending more than 30% of their pre-tax income on rent, according to a StreetEasy analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data. Rising prices driven by inflation and tariffs squeeze budgets further, moving retirement savings down the priority list.

The nature of work has also changed. Gen Z is more likely than previous generations to hold gig jobs, contract positions or other flexible work arrangements that often don't include employer retirement plans, according to Pew Research. Even when plans are available, only

22% participate. Feeling overwhelmed by jargon, confused by investment choices or focusing only on today's experiences and technology can all delay participation. These early gaps may lead to catch-up needs later in life.

Unfortunately, Gen Z has little faith in the retirement safety net. Only about a third of Gen Z-ers say they believe Social Security will still exist when they retire, according to the latest information from the CATO Institute.

Fortunately, there are steps Gen Z can take now to get their retirement savings off to a good start:

- **Start small:** Even a few dollars per paycheck builds a savings habit and gets compounding interest working in their favor. Early momentum matters more than starting big.
- **Let compounding do its work:** Small, consistent contributions can grow dramatically over time, especially when they have decades to

accumulate.

- **Use a workplace retirement account:** For anyone with access to a plan, enroll and contribute at least enough to receive any employer match. It's one of the few forms of "free money" available.

- **Open an IRA:** If no plan is available through work, take charge by opening an individual retirement account (IRA).

- **Simplify investing:** If the choices feel confusing, consider options such as a target date fund, which reduces complexity and helps keep you properly invested without needing expert advice.

- **Use found money:** Direct tax refunds, bonuses or gig income into retirement savings to boost progress without straining the monthly budget.

- **Automate contributions:** Automatic transfers make saving effortless. Review this annually and increase contributions as income grows.

- **Build confidence:** If invest-

ing feels overwhelming, look for quick financial education resources from an employer, plan provider or reputable nonprofit organization. Even a little knowledge can make decisions easier.

The path to retirement doesn't require perfection — just progress. Building consistency early helps create choices, security and financial breathing room later in life.

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

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Electronics Recycling Day on April 25

The First Congregational Church of Milford is sponsoring an Electronics Recycling Day on Saturday, April 25, from 8 a.m. to 12 noon. The church will ensure that 99% of dropped off items will be reused and recycled.

All computer monitors, computers, parts and accessories, faxes, copiers, printers, scanners and TV's can be recycled. Recycling fees range from \$5 to \$45 per item. Cell phones can be recycled at no charge and will be donated to charities that recycle and reuse them. The recycling vendor will erase and shred

all hard drives at no additional cost.

This event is an easy and fun way to dispose of the old electronics in your garage, basement, attic and offices, so start setting them aside now and bring them to the church parking lot on April 25. A drive-through process will allow those donating to quickly drop off their items where help will be available.

The First Congregational Church Electronics Recycling event is held twice a year during April and September. We very much appreciate the support of those who have previ-

ously chosen to responsibly recycle with us and look forward to continuing to offer this recycling opportunity.



Drop off in the church parking lot at 4 Congress St., Milford (opposite Draper Park, next to the Post Office). Please enter the lot from the Church Street entrance. Cash payments only.

For more information contact the First Congregational Church of Milford church office at 508-473-5259.

Annual Town Meeting to be held May 18

Milford's Annual Town Meeting will take place on Monday, May 18, at 7 p.m. in Upper Town Hall.

Town Meeting members

are asked to check in with the Town Clerk's Office at either entrance to the Upper Hall to ensure we have sufficient attendance for a

quorum.

As the meeting date approaches, the warrant will be available at www.milfordma.gov.

Milford High French students produce award winning videos



The Milford High School is pleased to announce that Class of 2027 students Catie Delaney and the group of Sophia Coelho, Emily Garcia, Isabella Grady-Harper, Fiona Lentini and Lucas Richard were all award winners in a national French education contest. Delaney placed first with her video, "Travailler.com," earning a prize of \$150. The group of Coelho, Garcia, Grady-Harper, Lentini, and Richard placed third in the contest and were awarded a \$100 prize for their video submission, "Le Bonne Fée."

The national contest was sponsored by the American Association of Teachers of French (AATF) in celebration of National French Week. Since 2013, the AATF has sponsored this student media contest to promote connections to Francophone themes, inviting students to create short videos or interactive media based on an annual prompt. This year's theme was Design Your Future with French. This year's competition was especially strong, with approximately 100 videos submitted from 40 schools across the United States.

Compost facility now open

The Milford Compost Facility on Fiske Mill Road is now open for the season.

This site is for permitted residents to dump leaves, grass, brush, and certain residential landscaping waste (rocks, gravel, asphalt, dirt, etc.). Please note the Milford Transfer Station does not accept these items.

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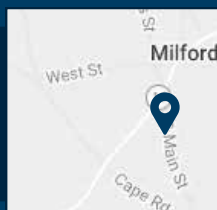
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Artificial Intelligence is Transforming Eye Care

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

EYES

continued on page 9

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Milford Town Library Calendar of Events

80 Spruce Street, Milford • 508-473-2145 • MilfordTownLibrary.org • HOURS: Mon. – Thurs. 9-9 • Fri. 9-6 • Sat. 9-5 • Sun. CLOSED

By Reference Department

AARP Tax Aide Program

The AARP Tax-Aide program recently wrapped up another successful tax season, helping nearly 300 senior and low-to-moderate income individuals file their income tax returns. Huge thanks to Coordinator Kirk Joslin and the entire AARP Tax volunteer team for their service and commitment.

Tax Forms

Federal and state tax forms are available in the library lobby. Additional forms and schedules can be found at irs.gov and mass.gov/personal-income-tax.

Pop Culture Memorabilia with Leila Dunbar

Milford native Leila “Lee” Dunbar is one of the top pop culture memorabilia appraisers in the country, with specialties

in sports, entertainment, comic and animation art, automobiles and wine. She is also a 30-year veteran of the long running PBS hit television series about appraising (can you guess the name)? A full time appraiser, Lee has valued the collections/estates of Prince, Johnny Cash, Katharine Hepburn, Babe Ruth, Mickey Mantle, David Ortiz, Bobby Orr, Arnold Palmer, Muhammad Ali, Steven Spielberg, George Lucas, Glenn Close, Jack Nicholson, Gregg Allman, Cher, Meatloaf, Larry Bird and many others.

On Monday, April 13 at 6:30 p.m., Lee returns to the Milford Town Library to talk about her career highlights, pop culture memorabilia, and appraise items as time allows. Registration via the library's online events calendar is required. Participants may opt to bring up to 2 items for consideration or just enjoy the talk and seeing other people's stuff. All items for consideration must be dropped off to the library's program room between 5:30 - 6 p.m.

This program is generously sponsored by the Friends of the Milford Town Library.

Friends Spring Book Sale

The Friends of the Milford Town Library will hold their spring book sale on Friday, April 24 from 3:30 - 6:30 p.m. for members and on Saturday, April 25 from 9:30 a.m. - 3 p.m. for the general public. Find amazing, near new books, puzzles, games, CDs, and movies for children, teens, and adults at excellent prices. Memberships may be purchased or renewed at the

door. The Friends sponsor the youth and adult summer reading programs, concerts, hands-on creative workshops, readings and lectures, enriching the library experience for everyone!

Reiki Guided Meditation with Tina Gryzboski

On Thursday, April 30 at 7 p.m., join us for a healing and relaxing meditation session with Tina Gryzboski! As an energy therapy practitioner and owner of Reiki Vibes Energy Therapy, Tina is an extremely intuitive empath, offering her gifts via the practice of Reiki. Registration via the library's online events calendar is required for this event.

This program is generously sponsored by the Friends of the Milford Town Library.

Tina has been studying the healing arts since 2018. She re-

ceived her certifications through Women of Wisdom in Easton, MA, graduating from the Advanced Holistic Professionals program in June of 2020. She has attained the master teacher level in Usui, Shamballa MDH, Holy Fire® III World Peace, and Karuna® Reiki. She also obtained an Integrated Energy Therapy® (IET) advanced level certification. In 2021, she started her journey in the Earth Medicine program. With each year that passes she learns different aspects of Indigenous American spiritual teachings, energy medicine, and acquired a certificate as an Akisni Oyateki healing practitioner. In 2023, she expanded her skill set to include

LIBRARY

continued on page 10

EYES

continued from page 8

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.

Commitment to you

Milford-Franklin Eye Center outcomes rival those of major Boston hospitals while keeping care close to home. We offer same-day emergency care, Saturday appointments, and a full-service optical shop with an on-site lab. Our QUAD A-accredited surgery center provides the highest level of safety and comfort, with anesthesiologists and IV sedation available for every procedure. Unlike practices performing office-based cataract surgery without anesthesia support, we ensure world-class care in a fully accredited facility.

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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Town Clerk updates

Town Election Information

The Annual Town Election will be held at your normal polling locations on Tuesday April 7 from 7 a.m. until 8 p.m.

P1 & P6 - Milford Senior Center - 60 North Bow St.

P2 & P3 - Italian American Vets Hall - 4 Hayward Field

P4, P5, P7 & P8 - Milford Portuguese Club - 119 Prospect Heights

The following persons are up for re-election at our Annual April 7 Town Election:

Thomas J. O'Loughlin - Select Board

Amy E. Hennessy Neves - Town Clerk

Steven Borges - Board of Assessors

Opening - Board of Health

Edward Bertorelli - Library Trustee

Mary Frances Best - Library Trustee

Paul J. Braza - Park Commissioner

Martha White - Planning Board

Leonardo L. Morcone - Sewer Commissioner

Michelangelo Bon Tempo - Town Moderator

Charles E. Reneau - Tree Warden/Gypsy Moth Superintendent

Brendan Rickert - School Committee

Michael Aghajanian - School Committee

Katherine E. Consigli - Housing Authority

Scott J. Crisafulli - Vernon Grove Trustee

Chase Filosa - Vernon Grove Trustee

Philip Ciaramicoli - Water Commissioner

The following are openings in our Town Meeting Precincts:

Pr. 1 - (3) two year openings & (2) one year openings

Pr. 2 - (1) two year opening & (3) one year openings

Pr. 3 - (2) two year openings & (8) one year openings

Pr. 4 - (2) two year openings & (8) one year openings

Pr. 5 - (1) two year opening

Pr. 6 - (6) one year openings

2026 Notice to Dog Owners

Beginning April 1, 2026, all dog owners who have not renewed their dog's license for the previous year will be required to pay for both years:

1. The 2025 Dog license plus (\$10) late fee for the unpaid year, &

2. The new license fee for the current year.

To avoid additional charges, please make sure your dog's license is renewed before March 31, 2026. Licensing your dog helps ensure compliance with State and Town By-Laws, supports animal control office services, and assists in returning lost pets to their owners. Cost breakdown: Male and Female dogs \$25 per dog (per year). Spayed and neutered dogs \$6 per dog (per year). PLUS an additional \$10 late fee per dog licensed after July 1, 2026. Fees can be paid in cash, check, or credit card. (Note: Unibank will charge an additional service fee for credit/debit cards used)

Town Meeting

The Annual Town Meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 18 at 7 p.m. in Upper Town Hall. Members are asked to check in with the Town Clerk's Office at either of then entrances to the Upper Hall to ensure we have sufficient attendance for a quorum. The warrant will be available on the Town website www.milfordma.gov when we get closer to May.

Submitted by Milford Town Clerk

LIBRARY

continued from page 9

hypnotherapy and became certified with the International Association of Counselors and Therapists (IACT).

Before taking on the role of energy practitioner, Tina worked in the healthcare field for 20+ years, first as a Certified Nurses Assistant caring for the elderly, sick, and disabled, then working as a dental professional. At a young age she always knew she wanted to help people.

Reading Signing: Citizen Soldier: A Story of War, Friendship, and Remembrance

John Villani, and his best friend from high school, Lou Gentile—two eighteen-year-old boys from Milford were inducted together into the US Army as privates in 1944 and engaged in ground combat as infantry riflemen in the European theater of operations in World War II. John wrote a memoir at the age of 74 recollecting their military service with the US 100th Infantry Division as it successfully prevailed in key final battle engagements in France and Germany. John and Lou witnessed the day of Allied victory over the German Third Reich in May 1945.

John's daughters Paula Bruggeman and Karen Gullede posthumously published this memoir, *Citizen Soldier: A Story of War, Friendship and Remembrance* in 2025, marking the 80th anniversary of the Allied victory.

Please join the Milford Historical Commission and the Friends of the Milford Town Library at a special reading and signing with Paula and Karen on Saturday, May 2 at 2 p.m. at Memorial Hall. Copies of *Citizen Soldier: A Story of War, Friendship and Remembrance* will be available for purchase at the event. Copies may also be purchased online at Politics and Prose, an independent bookstore in Washington, D.C. Copies are also available at the Milford Town Library to borrow. Call 508-473-2145 ext. 2 for more information.

Designing and Planting the Entry Garden with Warren Leach

The garden space between the street, driveway, walkway and your home offers a powerful first impression to someone arriving to your door. On Saturday, May 9 at 2 p.m., join Landscape Horticulturist Warren Leach, owner

of Tranquil Lake Nursery in Rehoboth, Massachusetts, for a visual tour of enticing entry gardens using before and after scenarios. He will focus on walkway design and construction techniques, solving problems of scale and grade as well as showcasing a rich planting palette that offers year-round beauty with an eye to low maintenance. Your entry garden will be a pleasure for you to enjoy as well as a warm welcome to guests. A book signing of Warren's new book, *Plants for the Winter Garden*, will follow! Copies may be purchased for \$40 (cash, check or credit card are accepted). No registration is required - free and open to all!

For more information about Warren and Tranquil Lake Nursery, visit his website at <https://tranquil-lake.com/>.

This program is generously sponsored by the Friends of the Milford Town Library.

English Classes

The library offers free English classes for those adults who want to improve their listening and speaking skills. Beginner classes are held each Tuesday and Thursday evening from 7 - 8 p.m. An intermediate class is held on Thursdays at 5:30 p.m. All classes take place in the ESL classroom on the lower level of the library.

Step into a Book: Audiobook Walking Club

Take your book for a walk with the library! Whether you're an avowed audiobook fan or audio-curious, walking is a great way to enjoy an audiobook while keeping your body engaged. This cross-town program features one walk in Milford, led by Milford Town Library's Annie Glater; and one walk in Hopkinton, led by Hopkinton Public Library's Danielle Wolber.

- Saturday, May 16, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Milford Upper Charles Trail. For parking use Louisa Lake Recreation Area Parking Lot on Dilla St., Milford.

- Saturday, June 13, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Hughes and Echo Loop, Hopkinton. You can park at 192 Hayden Rowe, Hopkinton.

Make sure to bring your own water! Hydration is important! Snacks will be provided at the midpoint. We will have two walking groups to accommodate different walking speeds. The program will be canceled in the event of extreme weather, but we will walk if there is light rain.

LIBRARY

continued on page 11

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Milford High French teacher awarded \$8,000 grant

Grant to expand Francophone Cultural and Educational Exchange

Milford High School French Teacher, Ms. Lydia Buckley, has been awarded a grant in the amount of \$8,000 by the Selection Committee of the French as a World Language Program at Villa Albertine, the French Institute for Culture and Education of the French Embassy. The Pedagogical Project Grant will directly impact approximately 500 students annually across the district.

Key program highlights include:

- **Immersive Cultural Activities:** Funding will support participation in the Grand

Concours (National French Contest), a school-wide French spelling bee (dictée), and a guest speaker series featuring francophone authors, artists, and historians.

- **Global Partnerships:** The district will establish a multi-year virtual exchange and pen-pal program with a francophone partner school. This connection will allow students to build lasting relationships with international peers from middle school through graduation.
- **Summer Immersion:** A new French Summer Immersion

Camp, led by teachers and French Honor Society students, will offer interactive projects and museum visits to extend learning beyond the traditional school year.

- **Modernized Resources:** The initiative includes investments in updated educational materials, including new francophone texts, cultural readings, and magazine subscriptions. Buckley said, "By connecting classroom learning with global communities, the project aims to increase student enthusiasm, improve language proficiency, and foster deep cultural un-

derstanding. The ultimate goal is to build a sustainable international partnership that encourages students to pursue upper-level French courses and participate in future in-person exchange opportunities." Buckley added, "We want to thank the French Institute for Culture and Education of the French Embassy for this grant. Their considerable financial support will help to grow our French world language program, and offer new opportunities for our students."

Buckley teaches several levels of French at Milford

High School. Recently, several students have entered and been awarded prizes in various French language competitions, including student created French educational videos and oratorical contests.

MHS Principal Josh Otlin shared, "Lydia is one of the outstanding educators at Milford High School. She has a genuine passion for teaching French as a world language, and her enthusiasm and advocacy is contagious. Her students excel speaking, reading, and writing French, and Ms. Buckley is a big reason why."

LIBRARY

continued from page 10

Need help getting set up with an audiobook? Your librarians can help you find books on CD, all-in-one Playaway, or free to download on your phone. Stop into your library a few days before the program to get assistance. Registration is not required. Please register if you would like weather updates.

This program is co-sponsored by the Friends of the Milford Upper Charles Trail and the Hopkinton Trails Club.

New: Adult Reading Club

Love reading and discussing books with others? Come join us at the Milford Town Library Adult Book Club! Designed for readers 18 and older, our meetings take place on the third Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. April's meeting will be held on Thursday, April 16 to discuss *Monsters: A Fan's Dilemma* by Claire Dederer. In this book, Dederer, author and former movie critic for Seattle Weekly, asks the question: How can we continue to enjoy the work of artists, authors, and filmmakers have done despicable things in their personal lives? Titles are provided in various formats (e.g. large print and audio) when available. The library will have copies of the book on hand prior to the scheduled date of the discussion for you to borrow.

Center Book Group

The Center Book Group meets next on Tuesday, April 21 at 10 a.m. at the Milford Senior Center to discuss Lisa Jewell's

None of This is True. Jewell, a bestselling British author delivers another trademark tense, psychological thriller. True crime podcaster Alix Summers meets her "birthday twin" Josie Winters and decides to tell Josie's troubled, abusive story on the air. Josie proves to be an unreliable narrator and soon Alix and her family are in danger.

To reserve a regular or large print copy, please call the Information Desk at 508-473-2145 ext. 2 or use the Libby App.

Milford Area Wordsmiths

Looking for a quiet, dedicated time and place where you can write? Join the Milford Area Wordsmiths writer's group. We provide a safe place for adults (18+) to write and even share your work if you desire. The Wordsmiths meet the first and third Mondays of the month (except holidays) from 7 - 8 p.m. Carol Allen, a retired teacher and writer, facilitates the group. Writers of all levels and genres are invited to join the Wordsmiths. April and May meetings: April 20, May 4 and 18.

Mahjong

The Mahjong group meets twice a month on Tuesdays from 6 - 8 p.m. in the Quarry Room on the lower level of the library. This group welcomes beginning and developing players to join for enjoyment of the game, not for high stakes competition! Mahjong sets are provided. Questions? Please call the Information Desk at 508-473-2145 ext. 2. April and May meetings: April 14 and 28; May 12 and 26.

Spring at the Milford Family & Community Network CFCE

The Milford Family & Community Network CFCE, Open Sky Community Services, and the Milford Commission on Disability recently held their 28th Annual Family Fun & Disability Awareness Fair on March 14. This family resource event was a smashing success with 60 Exhibitors and over 350 people in attendance. A great time was had by all!

Take a look at our upcoming programs in April and call the office at 508-277-4981

to register.

Spring Time Fun

Join us for a stroll through the park and a spring sing-a-long at Bellingham Town Common on Wednesday, April 15. Registration is required.

Desserts and Discussions

Join Miss Harmony for this parent-led conversation and craft night on Wednesday, April 15 from 6 - 8 p.m. Registration is required.

Kindergarten Bootcamp

Wondering how to prepare your child for kindergarten?

Start the journey with us!

This 4 week program is for children entering kindergarten in the fall, along with their caregiver.

For more information on MFCN CFCE playgroups and/or programs, feel free to visit our website calendar or contact us at 508-277-4981 or familynetwork@milfordma.com, online at milfordpublicschools.com/milfordfcn, or on Facebook at Milford Family and Community Network CFCE.



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Milford Public Schools updates

Important Dates:
April 20 - 24 - No School - April Vacation

District News:
 Kindergarten Registration reminder: Have you registered your child for Kindergarten? If you have not, please visit as soon as possible: Family Resource Center, 189 Main St. 2nd Floor, Milford, MA 01757, phone 774-268-3843. Students must be five (5) years old on or before August 31 to enroll in Kindergarten.

Mark your calendars! Our annual School Day Games will be taking place on Thursday, May 14 at the Milford High School Track and Field. Please note that there will be a rain date of May 15. For those unfamiliar with "SDG," this is a day celebrating Special Olympics, Best Buddies, our student-athletes, and inclusion for the entire District. It is a truly inspiring day that showcases some of the best in our community. We are looking forward to celebrating another year of inclusion together!

Our talented musicians from Grades 3-12 had an opportunity to showcase their talents and skills in front of two packed houses at the MHS Gym. On March 17, the Grades 5-12 Band Vertical Concert entertained a full house, while on March 18, the Grades 3-12 Strings Vertical Concert did the same. It's so great for our families and students to be able to see where our musicians are headed... or how far they have come! Outstanding job by the band students and teachers!

Milford High School
 A group of about 20 Milford High School students recently participated in the "Digital Divas" Technology Bootcamp, hosted by Blue Mantis at Gillette Stadium. During the one-day event on March 3, students collaborated with peers from across the state to solve simulated cybersecurity attacks, working in teams as if they were employed by leading global technology companies such as

Fortinet, Rubrik, and Lenovo. The experience provided hands-on exposure to real-world IT and cybersecurity challenges while connecting students with women that are leaders in the tech industry. A special thank you to Blue Mantis for hosting such a meaningful and inspiring day for our students! This is a great example of the type of opportunities Milford High students encounter as part of our efforts to get students exposure and experiences with a number of industries, careers, and pathways as they explore their post-graduate plans. Our MHS guidance staff, teachers, and particularly our Career Counselor & Work-Based Learning Coordinator Ms. Deb Monteiro seeks out these networking and events to show our students the wealth of possibilities that might interest them following their Milford High education.

Congratulations to the MHS Percussion Ensemble, directed by Ms. Jill Boday, for their outstanding performance at the annual RI Percussion Festival on Saturday, March 7. They earned an "Excellent" rating! Members of the Percussion Ensemble are: Marcelo Gomes da Silva, Diego Gomes, Chris Lalangui Ponce,



A group of about 20 Milford High School students recently participated in the "Digital Divas" Technology Bootcamp hosted by Blue Mantis at Gillette Stadium. Courtesy photo

Nick Lalangui Ponce, David Lopez Ochoa, Dan O'Leary, Caleb Ramnauth, Brenda Soares, Victor Topham, and Maggy Zou.

Kyla Nashawaty and Lilah Driscoll represented Milford High School at the Hockomock League Leadership Executive Ambassador Program on March 11. This program helps student-athlete leaders from around the Hockomock League develop their skills in planning, leader-

ship, and mentorship, while networking with athletic peers from our athletic conference to collaborate and build relationships. We're proud of Kyla and Lilah for representing us so well as student-athlete leaders. Way to go girls!

We have to highlight our National Champion MHS Cheer team! On March 13-15, they competed at AmeriCheer Internationals in Orlando, Florida. This was their second National Title with AmeriCheer and first ever Grand National title! The team competed in the Varsity All Music division against teams from New York and Massachusetts and won that division. They also won Grand Champions against 15 other teams from all over the east coast and Ohio, which means they had the highest score of any division that competed in that session. So much practice, time, and hard work went into this great accomplishment! The team also won the "Show Your Spirit" Award, which means not only did the girls cheer for themselves but they also supported other teams. This also includes the team's family and friends, who brought the Milford Pride and spirit to the competition each day. A special high five to the senior cheerleaders capping their careers with a title!

MHS World Language Honor Societies' Clothing Drive and

Goodbye winter, hello spring!

Spring is brake season, come in now for your **FREE** brake and suspension check!

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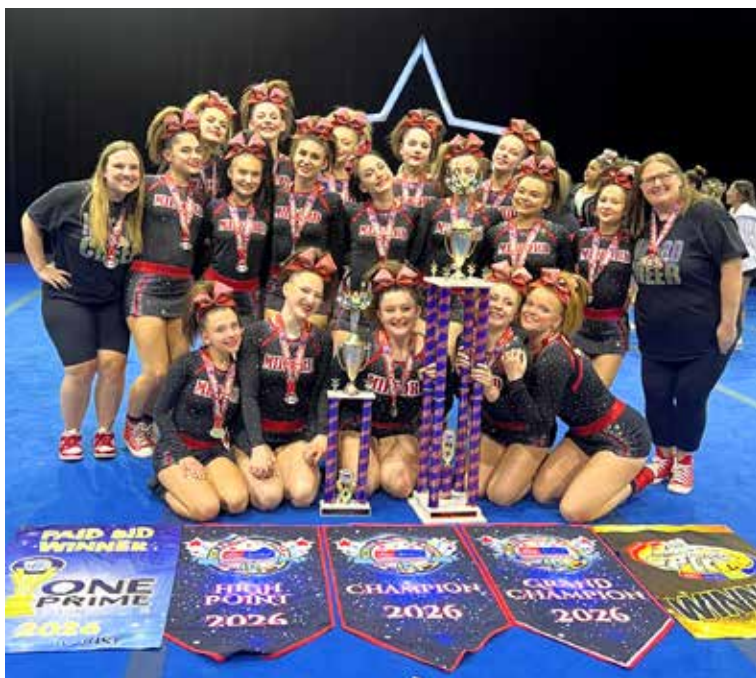
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SCHOOLS

continued on page 13



On March 13-15, The MHS Cheer Team competed at AmeriCheer Internationals in Orlando, FL. This was their second National Title with AmeriCheer and first ever Grand National title. The team also won the "Show Your Spirit" Award. Courtesy photo

SCHOOLS

continued from page 12

More! Are you looking for somewhere to donate your items? If so, the Milford High School World Language Honor Societies is holding a CLOTHING AND MORE Drive through FUNDrive. The money raised by the donations will go towards the Milford High School World Language Honor Societies. You can drop off your clothing donations directly in our UHaul on Friday, April 17 between 3 and 4 p.m. at the side of the high school.

Please email Lydia Buckley at lbuckley@milfordma.com with any questions!

Woodland Elementary School

The Milford Community School Use Program has a new program at Woodland: Newspaper Club. This has quickly become a hit among students at Woodland Elementary School! Participants have the opportunity to create their own articles, comics, recipes, games, and more. No matter the idea, every effort is made to include submissions in the newspaper to showcase as many student interests as possible. The first edition was released at the beginning of February, and a newspaper box will soon be placed in the Woodland Elementary School library allowing students and teachers to pick up their own copy. It's a great read!

Brookside Elementary School

At Brookside School, Second Grade students have been learning how wells help many people gain access to clean water as part of their literacy unit titled, "Water for Everyone." Students made a replica of a well to see how water can be drawn from underground using a pump. At the end, they used the well they created to explain, in writing, how the whole process works. The students had a lot of fun doing this hands-on project.

Memorial Elementary School

Keeping the musical spirit alive, Memorial School welcomed "Manguito: A Musical Journey through the Caribbean" to our school. Manguito is a dynamic musical group that focuses equally on teaching and performing the vibrant music of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic. Their performance connected students to a rich Latin heritage — one that is important for all of us to preserve and pass on to younger generations. This performance was made possible through a generous grant from the Milford Cultural Council. We are grateful for their continued support of arts and cultural programming in our schools!

Memorial School kicked off Music in Our Schools Month with a wonderful Family Music Night! Students and families came together for an evening of music and movement activities. Thank you to our music teach-

ers, Mrs. Sarah Rohde and Mrs. Ellen Samiagio, for organizing and creating such a special evening for our school community.

On March 13, the Memorial PTO hosted a Magic Show that was well attended and enjoyed by all. Thank you to the Memorial PTO for planning such a fun evening, and a special thank you to 99 Restaurant for their generous popcorn donation!

On March 18, Memorial hosted Family Reading Night: Reading Helps Your Mind Bloom! Students and families enjoyed milk and cookies, made bookmarks, and listened to stories read by our wonderful staff members. Every student took home a book to keep. Thank you to the Memorial staff for planning and volunteering their time to make the evening such a success!

Shining Star Early Childhood Center

Shining Star is celebrating their March Character Kids! Congratulations to Jack, Lady, Sebastian and Arlo for demonstrating kindness. And, hip, hip, hurray to Melissa for demon-

strating bravery.

Shining Star's Staff Spotlight shines on:

Ms. Nicole Landry. She is hardworking, intelligent, and organized, and full of empathy and kindness. She really takes the time to listen to her students and coworkers, which creates a calm, welcoming and supportive environment. She is always willing to lend a helping hand, offer words of encouragement, and support the people around her as best as she can. Students, colleagues, and friends are beyond lucky to spend time with someone like her.

Ms. Kaleigh Cole. Our students love classes with Ms. Cole. She makes class a fun and productive time, and they always come back with big smiles! She is supportive of colleagues, and excited about the progress our kids make. We're lucky to work with her.

Ms. Michelle Gray. Ms. Gray is a wonderful, caring and dedicated teacher. Her kindness and commitment to the students is one to be admired and her passion and positivity is inspiring

to be seen. She is so genuinely kind everyday. Thank you, Ms. Gray, for all you do, and your unwavering commitment to your students.

Ms. Kellie Nashawaty. Her kindness, creativity, and dedication to her work makes her worthy of recognition. Her commitment to her students is evident in every session as they always leave her office with the biggest smile on their faces. It is clear how much her students enjoy working with her, and the positive impact she has on them is undeniable. Kellie is an exceptional collaborator who is always open to sharing ideas and working toward common goals.

Ms. Robyn Gentilotti-Simone. She has a caring and nurturing way with all of the students she works with. She strives to get to know each student and will always find a way to connect with them. Robyn is a great problem solver and enjoys a challenge, especially when it comes to fixing equipment for our medically fragile students. She is wonderful to work with.

Submitted by Milford Public Schools

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Milford Public Schools in pictures

Submitted by Milford Public Schools



Elise Cartier, a Milford High School Junior, recently represented the school at the 28th Annual French Language Oratorical Contest, sponsored by the Club Richelieu of Salem. Competing against students from area high schools, Elise was named a runner-up in the competition. Students delivered speeches in French responding to a prompt about social media and apps, discussing which platforms they use, how often they use them, and whether they can help with learning French.



Mr. Minh Lê, a highly acclaimed, award-winning author known for his impactful picture books and graphic novels for children, virtually visited Brookside's Kindergarten and Second Grade students this week. What an exciting and educational experience for our students! Thank you, Mrs. Lange Madden, for organizing this and thank you to our Brookside PTO for funding it!



Students in Ms. Leah Smith's classroom at Stacy Middle School presented their opinions to Dr. Consigli on things they believe should change at school. They were so persuasive in their writing and in their presentations that Dr. Consigli agreed to a few of their opinions. Some opinions were very popular with multiple students, such as having more pizza days. Others were focused on how long the school day is and requested half days. (That one was not approved.) However, there were a few compromises: HVAC upgrades and new painting will be looked at by Dr. Consigli. Students did a great job with their writing assignment and public speaking! Submitted by Milford Public Schools

Milford Public Schools Superintendent Craig Consigli recently honored six Milford High School seniors for their outstanding work in the classroom. Dr. Consigli

had these seniors join him at a School Committee meeting to be recognized. Congratulations to these outstanding representatives of the Class of 2026. Dr. Consigli

and School Committee Chair Mr. Matt Zacchilli with each award are pictured with each award winner.

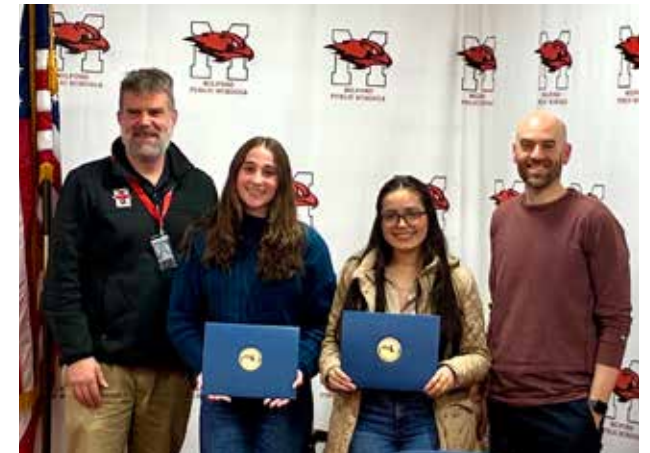
Submitted by Milford Public Schools



Luke Stachowski and Ana Julia Pereira recently received the Worcester County Superintendent's Association Scholar's Award.



National School Development Council Academic Growth & Student Leadership in Learning Award: Nathaly Cerritos and Lucas Gomes (not pictured).



Ana Julia Pereira and Giovanna Weiner were recently presented with the M.A.S.S. Certification of Academic Excellence. Submitted by Milford Public Schools

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03/26/2026	31-33 Vine St.	\$545,000
03/25/2026	44 Silver Hill Rd.	\$1.15 mil
03/24/2026	1 E. Main St.	\$380,000
03/23/2026	3 Pouliot St.	\$459,000
03/20/2026	8 Brandy Ln.	\$530,000
03/19/2026	6 Correia Cir.	\$370,000
03/18/2026	25 Haven St.	\$500,000
03/16/2026	11 Country Club Ln. #D	\$405,000
03/11/2026	10 Yale Dr.	\$650,000
03/03/2026	3 Fordham Dr.	\$549,900
03/03/2026	6 1/2 Leonard St.	\$299,900
03/02/2026	14 Country Club Ln. #C	\$407,300
03/02/2026	8 Country Club Ln. #B	\$385,000
02/27/2026	9 Shadowbrook Ln. #29	\$280,000
02/27/2026	38 Walker Ave. Ext.	\$580,000
02/27/2026	85 Congress St.	\$340,000
02/27/2026	20 Elm St.	\$514,000
02/27/2026	28 Fells Ave.	\$300,000
02/27/2026	17 Cunniff Ave.	\$675,000

Source: www.zillow.com / Compiled by Milford Free Press



The 3-bed, 4-bath, 5,214-square-foot house at 44 Silver Hill Road in Milford recently sold for \$1,150,000. Image credit: www.zillow.com

Haynes reappointed as Inspector of Animals

By Theresa Knapp

At the March 23 meeting of the Select Board reappointed Animal Control Officer Keith Haynes as the town's Inspector of Animals.

At the meeting, Town Administrator Richard Villani said Haynes has served in this position for many years.

Each year, the town is required to make this appointment.



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Greenleaf Garden Club Plans Annual Plant Sale

The Greenleaf Garden Club of Milford announces its annual plant sale which features Milford grown perennials will be held on Saturday, May 9, rain or shine, at the Louisa Lake parking lot on Dilla Street in Milford from 8 a.m. to noon. Greenleaf Garden Club members are busy dividing and potting up plants and will be selling them at reasonable

prices. In addition, there will be native plants, annuals, vegetables, herbs, hanging baskets and container gardens as well.

The Garden Gallery will feature an array of gardening related items for sale and club members will be available to answer questions, give tips and planting instructions. Coffee and refreshments will be offered for your pleasure.

Proceeds from the sale are used to fund our two scholarships as well as the Garden Therapy and Junior Gardeners programs, and the club's civic plantings around town.

The Greenleaf Garden of Milford, Inc. is a member of the National Garden Clubs, Inc. and the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts. For further information contact us at greenleafgardenclub@gmail.com.

UMass Memorial – Milford Regional holding 2nd Annual Senior Wellness and Resources Fair

UMass Memorial Health – Milford Regional Medical Center's Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC) is holding its second annual Senior Wellness and Resources Fair on Wednesday, May 20 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The Fair will provide seniors and caregivers the opportunity to connect with senior agencies, health services and other community support organizations in one accessible venue. The

event will be held in the hospital's Atrium Café and is free of charge.

For questions, contact UMass Memorial – Milford Regional Community Benefits Manager and PFAC Secretary Michelle Sanford at 508-422-2827 or Michelle.sanford@umassmemorial.org.

About UMass Memorial Health – Milford Regional Medical Center
 UMass Memorial Health - Milford Regional Medical

Center is a full-service, regional teaching hospital that serves patients from more than 20 communities in Central Massachusetts. The 148-bed hospital is a nonprofit, acute-care facility where more than 300 primary care and specialty clinicians are relentless in providing exceptional healthcare services to our community with dignity, compassion, and respect. Visit www.milfordregional.org to learn more.



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BVT's FY27 budget approved by School Committee

Milford assessed \$2.4M

On March 12, the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District School Committee approved the proposed FY27 budget, advancing a plan that emphasizes fiscal discipline, cost-saving measures, and continued investment in high-quality career and technical education. As a fiscally autonomous regional school District, all expenses are rolled into a single annual per-pupil assessment to its member towns, giving the District one "bite at the apple" each year.

As you review the FY27 budget report and consider your investment in BVT, you will see the proactive planning and strategic use of resources reflected throughout the document. While the state estimates that vocational education should cost nearly twice as much as traditional education, BVT has consistently submitted budgets with per-pupil costs well below that estimate. Compared with its 25 sister vocational schools, BVT ranks in the bottom third for per-pupil expenditure, demonstrating financial efficiency without com-

Town	Enrollment	Operation Ratio	Minimum Contribution	Transportation Capital Equip Retiree Med	Additional Assessment	Debt	FY 2027 Assessment
Bellingham	77	6.16%	1,098,162	177,164	94,169	-	1,369,495
Blackstone	60	4.80%	647,166	138,049	73,378	-	858,593
Douglas	132	10.56%	1,859,022	303,709	161,433	-	2,324,164
Grafton	92	7.36%	1,363,298	211,676	112,514	-	1,687,488
Hopedale	65	5.20%	801,305	149,554	79,493	-	1,030,352
Mendon	74	5.92%	1,274,871	170,261	90,500	-	1,535,632
Milford	204	16.32%	1,655,694	469,370	249,486	-	2,374,550
Millbury	77	6.16%	1,084,378	177,164	94,169	-	1,355,711
Millville	22	1.76%	240,117	50,618	26,905	-	317,640
Northbridge	167	13.36%	1,976,202	384,239	204,237	-	2,564,678
Sutton	72	5.76%	1,240,415	165,660	88,054	-	1,494,129
Upton	94	7.52%	1,580,831	216,278	114,960	-	1,912,069
Uxbridge	114	9.12%	1,861,710	262,295	139,419	-	2,263,424
TOTAL	1,250	100.00%	16,683,171	2,876,037	1,528,717	-	21,087,925

promising educational quality. These metrics reflect a strong return on investment for its member communities.

In addition to benefits, salary and wage are typically the largest drivers of school budgets. This year, BVT achieved a modest 3.9% increase in employee health insurance benefits, well below the regional norm of 15–20% increases, which ultimately becomes a major component of the budget. The School Committee and the Teachers' Association worked amicably

this year to settle the next three-year contract. The agreement includes increases well below the current regional norm of 11% and is estimated to save the District approximately \$2 million over its duration.

"I am grateful for, and happy to report, that we have fostered and maintained the working relationships and awareness that allow our system to continually make adjustments to run more efficiently," said Anthony E. Steele II, Superintendent-Director. "Whether it is negotiating benefits and contracts to contain costs or applying for grants and seeking donations to supplement revenues, everyone at BVT is rooted in protecting quality career technical education at

The Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District School Committee has approved a FY27 budget of \$21,087,925, and Milford's total contribution for FY2027 is \$2,374,550.

- **Enrollment:** 204 students
- **Operation ratio:** 16.32%
- **Minimum contribution:** \$1,655,694
- **Transportation, capital equipment, retiree medical:** \$469,370
- **Additional assessment:** \$249,486*

Regarding the "additional assessment," BVT officials say these are costs not captured elsewhere in the assessment, and they warn that noncompliance can lead to penalties, including a reduction in state aid.

"There are several necessary expenditures required to operate and maintain the District that are not fully funded by state aid and Minimum Contribution amounts. After careful consideration of all anticipated revenues and expenditures, the Additional Assessment bridges the gap in revenues to create a balanced budget.

"Reductions to the Additional Assessment must take into consideration Required Net School Spending (NSS) that is established and monitored by the state. Districts that are considered noncompliant may be subject to penalties, including future reductions in Chapter 70 aid."

Image source: www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/about/district/fy27budgetreport

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mindfully efficient expense." In preparing next year's budget, our goal is to keep BVT's high-quality vocational education as affordable as possible while maintaining the programs and supports our students need to succeed. That work also relies on the support of informed and engaged municipal partners like you. We appreciate your shared commitment to fiscal responsibility and educational excellence.

The proposed FY27 budget will be presented at 13 annual town meetings this spring, where it will seek community support. The full budget report is available for review on the school's website at www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/fy27budgetreport.

Submitted by Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District

Pets of the Month: Brook and Bean

Brook and Bean are little barn babies. Both girls were very shy when they arrived. As the weeks passed, Brook started to come around. This little tricolor tabby tux now seeks attention and loves to be pet. She does not yet enjoy being picked up, but she just melts into you and craves love and affection.

Her sister Bean isn't quite there yet; while Brook is cuddling up to you, Bean is trying to disappear into the corner. She will allow gentle petting but spooks easily. We are certain that with security and consis-

tency Bean will discover all the benefits of attention that Brook has already discovered. The way to Bean's heart might just be through play. Both girls love their toys and can't wait to have a room to run around in.

Brook and Bean have waited four long months to find a loving home. All they really need now is a family and a safe space they can call their own.

For information on meeting Brook and Bean, or the other cats at the Milford Humane Society, please visit <https://www.milfordhumane.org/>



Annual Milford Beautification Day Saturday, April 25

Citizens for Milford is organizing the Annual Milford Beautification Day, which enables area residents, organizations, and businesses to work together to beautify our community by picking up trash around town. Milford Beautification Day will be held Saturday, April 25 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. with a rain date of Sunday, April 26 from noon to 3 p.m. All interested citizens are invited to meet with organizers anytime between those hours in the municipal parking lot across from Sacred Heart Church (5 East Main Street) to get supplies, instructions, and assignments.

Families, community groups, churches, local businesses, and teenagers who need to perform service hours are all invited to participate. Younger children are encouraged to attend as long as they are accompanied by a supervising adult.

All Beautification Day volunteers are invited to a free lunch courtesy of the Milford Lions Club and Milford's Rail Trail Flatbread Company to thank everyone for their efforts to beautify our community. Lions Club members will be grilling hamburgers and hot dogs on site, and folks from Rail Trail Flatbread Company will be serving samples of New City Microcreamery ice cream. Master Roof will also be hosting a water bottle refill station and allowing public access to its restroom, conveniently located across the street. In the event of rain, food service will

not be available on Sunday.

To help ensure the organizers can plan the clean-up routes for volunteers, the group is asking residents to report streets and neighborhoods that are of particular concern. Residents can submit their recommendations by emailing them to CitizensforMilford@gmail.com or by messaging them to the Citizens for Milford Facebook page (@CitizensforMilford) before 5 p.m. on Thursday, April 23.

Community involvement with Beautification Day continues to grow. Citizens for Milford is sincerely grateful to the Milford Highway Department, Friends of the Milford Upper Charles Trail, Milford Lions Club, Rail Trail Flatbread Company and Master Roof. Corporate volunteers continuing their partnership with us this year include Milford Federal Bank, & Milford Doubletree Hotel. Combined with the work of all residents who volunteer on Beautification Day, this event is a true demonstration of community pride.

Questions regarding any of the Beautification Day efforts may be submitted by email to CitizensforMilford@gmail.com.

Citizens for Milford is a volunteer, nonpartisan, grassroots organization, which includes a diverse group of citizens who care about our community. Participation in our projects and events is open to everyone in Milford. More information is available on the group's website CitizensforMilford.com.



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SPORTS

Fiedler caps high school career with 4 league titles

Milford swimmer pulled off perfect run at Hockomock final

By Chris Villani

Ethan Fiedler is not afraid to admit that his success in this year's Hockomock League swimming championships caught even him a little bit by surprise. The Milford High senior was not picked to win any events, based on the pre-meet seeding; but he rattled off a perfect four-for-four run, finishing his final season with four Hockomock gold medals.

"It was awesome," Fiedler said. "It was exactly how I wanted to end my career. I could not have wanted it to end any other way."

Fiedler said he used his underdog status as motivation.

"That really drove me to really just leave everything I had in the pool," he said. "It was my last championship meet, and I really wanted to put everything I had into it."

Adding to the impressiveness of Fiedler's accomplishment is the fact that he did not swim what had been his primary event heading into this year.

"I was a breaststroker, but I ended up hurting my knee, and I couldn't do it going into this season," he said. "A couple of weeks before the season, I didn't think I was going to be able to swim. I was going through physical therapy for my knee and it caused me to have to switch up what I was doing and swim the backstroke."

Fiedler won the 100-meter backstroke at the Hockomock meet. He also took first in the 50-meter freestyle and was a member of the Scarlet Hawks' first-place medley and 400 meter freestyle relay teams.

MHS finished second in the league meet following a regular season in which the team won

all of its dual meets. Fiedler noted that the team did well despite losing several talented swimmers to graduation last year.

"I wasn't going into the season with the highest of hopes, but I saw how our first couple of practices were going and I could see we were going to do something really great this season," he said.

Fiedler has also competed in swimming at the club level. He said his mother suggested he try the sport when he was 11 years old. At first, it was not his favorite activity; but, when he was offered a spot on the Milford High team as an eighth grader, his feelings about swimming changed forever.

"It opened up a whole new world of opportunities," Fiedler said. "It made me fall in love with the sport."



Milford's Ethan Fiedler earned four gold medals in four events at his final league championship swim meet. Courtesy photo

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EMASS senior softball league player registration now open

Players aged 50 and older welcome to join

Eastern Massachusetts Senior Softball (EMASS) is opening its annual registration campaign for men and women softball players aged 50 and older. With approximately 500 members, the league attracts players from towns across Eastern Massachusetts, with games played primarily in Wayland, Medfield, Ashland, and Framingham.

The EMASS season runs from late April through early October, including playoffs. Interested players can register for the EMASS 2026 season at <https://e-mass.org/current-programs>.

EMASS has six divisions that accommodate a range of skill levels. Two play doubleheaders on Saturday mornings, and four play on weekday mornings. EMASS has many seniors in their fifties and sixties who can still hit a ball over a 300-foot fence, run down a deep drive in the outfield, or turn a double play in the infield. Other divisions allow players whose talents may have diminished over time to enjoy playing with similarly skilled friends.

For more information about EMASS Senior Softball League, visit www.e-mass.org.

SPORTS

Milford's Boccia earns wrestling All-American nod

MHS sophomore finished 5th at national meet



Brayden Boccia on the podium after a fifth-place finish at nationals that earned him All-America status. Courtesy photo

By Chris Villani

Milford High wrestler Brayden Boccia has accomplished a great deal in his

wrestling career, including becoming an all-American and the fastest wrestler in the program's storied history to hit

100 victories.

And he's only halfway done.

The MHS sophomore finished the year with a fifth-place finish at the NHSCA High School National wrestling meet. This followed an individual state title in the divisional meet and third-place finishes at both the New England regional championships and the all-state meet.

Boccia said winning his first state title felt good, especially after losing in the finals the previous season. While he was hoping to capture a New England title, he was able to fight back after losing his first match and win six in a row in order to rise to third place.

He said he drew inspiration from his coach at Doughboy Wrestling Club in Lowell. "He told me at nationals he lost

his first match and ended up wrestling all the way back," Boccia said. "I just kind of remembered that, and I knew I just had to win a couple to get going again."

Wrestling is literally in Boccia's blood. His dad, PJ, is Milford High's coach and a Hall of Fame wrestler who won a New England title and helped Milford to a state title as a team three decades ago.

Brayden Boccia grew up around the program, and his dad said he has been coming to practices in the wrestling room since he could crawl. "He deserves all the credit for his achievements, he puts in the work year-round," the elder Boccia said. "He goes to club practice, lifts, goes for runs, goes to his personal trainer Mike Jones and is con-

stantly working to improve on the mat."

The coach added, "He is a self-motivated kid and I have enjoyed coaching him the past two years."

Brayden Boccia said he likes having his dad as his coach. "Even when I go home, we can talk about wrestling. I have a coach I can ask questions to at any time."

Boccia wrestled at the 126lb division this year, but plans to move up in the next two seasons. He has several wrestling goals in mind, including winning a New England title and wrestling at the collegiate level. He also has his sights set on Aidan Baum's program record of 187 career victories.

"I want to beat that record," Boccia said. "I want to get to 200."

BVCC sings in Spring!

The Blackstone Valley Community Chorus presents *Songs of the Silver Screen*, on Sunday, May 3, at 4 p.m. The concert takes place at Valley Chapel at 14 Hunter Road in Uxbridge. *Songs of the Silver Screen* includes music from memorable moments of classic and modern movies from *The Wizard of Oz* to *KPOP Demon Hunters*. Admission is free, though donations are accepted and appreciated!

The Blackstone Valley Community Chorus is an enthusiastic group of more than eighty singers from towns throughout Central Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Singing under the direction of Diane Pollard

of Douglas, the BVCC has been committed to bringing musical performance opportunities to the Blackstone Valley for more than twenty years. Along with *Songs of the Silver Screen*, the BVCC will be performing at the Uxbridge Unified Choral Concert on March 24th and singing the National Anthem for the Worcester Bravehearts at Holy Cross Stadium on June 12th and for the Boston Red Sox at Fenway Park in September. For more information about these events, *Songs of the Silver Screen*, or how to join or support the chorus, visit the BVCC on Facebook or at www.bvccchorus.org.

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AS LOW AS \$82/WK
#TRB4313A • 17" ALLOYS, CPO
NEW RETAIL PRICE: ~~\$34,265~~ **WHOLESALE PRICE: \$22,977**

2023 TOYOTA RAV4 XLE
AS LOW AS \$110/WK
#TM26-531A • HEATED SEATS, CPO
NEW RETAIL PRICE: ~~\$36,160~~ **WHOLESALE PRICE: \$30,977**

2022 FORD EDGE SEL
AS LOW AS \$89/WK
#P18939 • NAV, 18" ALLOYS, AWD
NEW RETAIL PRICE: ~~\$40,395~~ **WHOLESALE PRICE: \$23,977**

2025 VW JETTA 1.5T
AS LOW AS \$74/WK
#P18718 • HEATED SEATS, SPORT
NEW RETAIL PRICE: ~~\$29,550~~ **WHOLESALE PRICE: \$20,977**

2021 LINCOLN CORSAIR
AS LOW AS \$96/WK
#P18546A • SUNROOF, LEATHER
NEW RETAIL PRICE: ~~\$46,645~~ **WHOLESALE PRICE: \$26,977**

2025 FORD BRONCO 4x4
AS LOW AS \$135/WK
#P18525 • CPO, BIG BEND TRIM
NEW RETAIL PRICE: ~~\$46,995~~ **WHOLESALE PRICE: \$31,977**

2024 SUBARU OUTBACK
AS LOW AS \$89/WK
#24P6082 • CPO, PREMIUM TRIM
NEW RETAIL PRICE: ~~\$34,695~~ **WHOLESALE PRICE: \$24,977**

2025 MERCEDES GLA 250 SUV
AS LOW AS \$132/WK
#25P3938 • 2.0L TURBO, LEATHER
NEW RETAIL PRICE: ~~\$50,800~~ **WHOLESALE PRICE: \$36,977**

2025 HYUNDAI ELANTRA
AS LOW AS \$72/WK
#TP6604 • SE TRIM, ALLOYS
NEW RETAIL PRICE: ~~\$28,686~~ **WHOLESALE PRICE: \$19,977**

2024 CHEVY COLORADO
AS LOW AS \$128/WK
#48281 • TURBO, 4X4, ALLOYS
NEW RETAIL PRICE: ~~\$44,290~~ **WHOLESALE PRICE: \$35,977**

2025 HONDA CIVIC SPORT
AS LOW AS \$96/WK
#TP6679 • 31/39 MPG CITY/HWY
NEW RETAIL PRICE: ~~\$34,190~~ **WHOLESALE PRICE: \$26,377**

2024 BUICK ENCORE AWD
AS LOW AS \$85/WK
#48464 • GX PREFERRED, TURBO
NEW RETAIL PRICE: ~~\$32,225~~ **WHOLESALE PRICE: \$23,977**

2023 MAZDA CX-5 2.5 S
AS LOW AS \$85/WK
#P18804 • AWD, HEATED SEATS
NEW RETAIL PRICE: ~~\$29,899~~ **WHOLESALE PRICE: \$23,977**

2023 BMW X1 xDrive28i
AS LOW AS \$118/WK
#25409A • AWD, TWIN TURBO, NAV
NEW RETAIL PRICE: ~~\$51,595~~ **WHOLESALE PRICE: \$32,977**

2022 RAM 1500 BIG HORN
AS LOW AS \$118/WK
#D15893A • 4X4, V8, 20" ALLOYS
NEW RETAIL PRICE: ~~\$45,710~~ **WHOLESALE PRICE: \$32,977**

2023 TOYOTA HIGHLANDER
AS LOW AS \$145/WK
#TP6841 • XLE TRIM, SUNROOF
NEW RETAIL PRICE: ~~\$45,775~~ **WHOLESALE PRICE: \$40,977**

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Mike Penner
General Manager

**SEVEN-DAY VEHICLE
EXCHANGE PROGRAM**

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