

localtownpages Franklin

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Free to Every Home and Business Every Month

September 1, 2026

Hungry folks on the rise at Franklin Food Pantry

FFP training to become a SNAP Outreach Partner to assist its clients



By JUDITH DORATO O'GARA

Nationwide, fewer people are receiving SNAP benefits. One recent NPR report cites preliminary Agriculture Department data that an average of 42 million people received SNAP last year, but as of April, that number has dropped to 37 million. Massachusetts' Department of Transitional Assistance also confirms fewer people are receiving benefits. According to their Monthly Zip Code Reports, 2,045 clients in Franklin

received assistance in June of 2025, compared to 1,650 in June of 2026. Bellingham figures also show a drop in that time period, from 1,800 to 1,446 clients. DTA "Performance Scorecard" figures show that statewide, Mass. residents receiving monthly SNAP benefits dropped from 659,661 in June 2025 to 561,585 in June

FOOD PANTRY

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St. Vincent de Paul Friends of the Poor Walk Sat., Sept. 26

Need among Franklin community has increased 150% since last year

By JUDITH DORATO O'GARA

Once again this year, the St. Vincent de Paul Society members of St. Mary Parish will walk to bring awareness to the Franklin Community of the struggles some neighbors experience. The Friends of the Poor Walk will loop around Franklin Town Common from 9-11 a.m. on Saturday, September 26th, rain or shine.

For 36 years, SVdP has been there to help people in need in Franklin regardless of race, religious beliefs or ethnic background. Last year, SVdP helped Franklin families 287 times for over \$95,000.

That need, in the past year, has "grown significantly," according to Chris Morris, who is in his third year as President of St. Mary's Society of St. Vincent de Paul, one of the largest in the district with about 30 volunteers. He expounds, "There are more people experiencing issues in three areas: assistance with rent or hous-



The annual SVdP Friends of the Poor Walk, which takes place around Franklin Town Common the morning of Sept. 26, is the only fundraiser for St. Mary's Society of St. Vincent de Paul, which offers help to anyone in Franklin who needs help, regardless of background. Photos used courtesy of SVdP.

ing, assistance with utilities, whether that be heating in the winter or electricity in the summer, and car-related – we don't have a great public transportation system in Franklin like they do in the city. It's hard for

them to pay their excise taxes living paycheck to paycheck." Similarly, just one auto repair, he explains, can set folks back, adding, "With the increase in rent and increase in electricity and gas and higher cost of repairs to cars, we just see more people struggling to make ends meet."

St. Mary's SvDP recently analyzed what they spent this year versus last.

"Last year, at this point, we had provided assistance to neighbors of about \$43,000 - \$44,000," says Morris, "This

SVDP WALK

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One year, countless second chances for animals

By JENNIFER RUSSO

In 2024, a group of people with experience in veterinary medicine and animal welfare had an idea rooted in something deceptively simple: They loved animals, they knew how to help them, and they had seen firsthand how the rising cost of veterinary care could force families into heartbreaking decisions. Their response was to create a different approach to providing surgical care: a high-volume, high-quality model designed to make certain procedures available at a lower cost.

The motivation was not complicated. They simply wanted to help.

That idea became Love Is Life Veterinary Clinic, a registered, nonprofit outpatient surgical center in Franklin. After taking a year to thoughtfully plan their approach and find a location to house the clinic, Love Is Life is now celebrating its first anniversary.

The clinic recently marked the milestone with a community celebration at Wag-A-Brew Dog Park in Millis, complete with live music, food trucks, merchandise sales, and, naturally, plenty of pets. It was a fitting setting for an organization whose mission is solely focused on keeping animals healthy, happy, and at home for as long as possible.

The founders, April Paul, Emily Paker-Morse, Dee Jansen, and Katie Young, have decades

of experience in the fields of veterinary medicine, veterinary science, clinical medicine, animal and public policy, and client relations. They have all seen how financial hardship can contribute to animals being surrendered to shelters or, in some One-Year cases, euthanized even when they could otherwise live longer, healthier lives. The organization estimates that economic circumstances play a role in about 75% of animal euthanasia cases. Together with their other talented staff members, Kelsey Attaya and Paula Dryden, their aim is to lower that percentage as much as they possibly can.

At Love Is Life, there is no judgment attached to asking for help. There is no economic or means testing for the clinic's services. If someone loves their pet and needs access to affordable surgical care, the team wants to help.

The clinic specializes in surgical procedures and also accepts referrals when a pet has been diagnosed with a condition requiring surgery and the cost of that procedure may be difficult for the family to manage.

That collaborative approach is important to the Love Is Life team. The clinic has access to the specialized equipment and surgical expertise necessary for its work, while recognizing that pet owners may need other forms of veterinary care, including diagnostic testing and

imaging, elsewhere. The goal is to be part of a larger network of people working to keep animals healthy.

Education is another part of the mission. The Love Is Life team works with veterinary students and practicing veterinarians to teach high-volume spay and neuter techniques. By sharing ways to perform quality procedures efficiently, the organization hopes to help more veterinary professionals provide accessible care and help more animals.

The clinic's high-volume approach also extends beyond individual pets. Spay and neuter procedures can play an important role in controlling animal populations and reducing the number of animals entering shelters. Love Is Life works with shelters, rescues, and animal control organizations, including efforts involving community cats and trap-neuter-return programs.

Love Is Life is also a participating provider with the Massachusetts Animal Fund's Spay/Neuter Voucher Program, which assists eligible Massachusetts residents by providing vouchers for the procedures, with scheduled voucher days.

For Love Is Life, though, the mission extends well beyond one program.

Its low-cost model is supported in part through donations, allowing the nonprofit to keep surgical care accessible,



The nonprofit Love Is Life Veterinary Clinic aims to make caring for pets accessible regardless of income. It recently celebrated its one-year anniversary.

and the hope is to keep growing.

More capacity means more surgeries. More surgeries mean more pets who can receive the care they need. More education means more veterinary professionals who can potentially bring efficient, high-quality care to their own communities.

That is a pretty meaningful way to spend a first year.

Love Is Life may have cel-

ebrated its anniversary in style, but the real celebration is happening every time a pet gets to go home with the family that loves it.

One year down. Hopefully, many thousands of second chances to go.

Learn more about Love is Life and their mission at www.lilvc.org, or by emailing info@lilvc.org.

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A photograph of a family (a man, a woman, and two children) playing together in a grassy field. The woman is lifting one of the children, and they are all smiling and laughing. The background is a soft-focus green field with trees in the distance.

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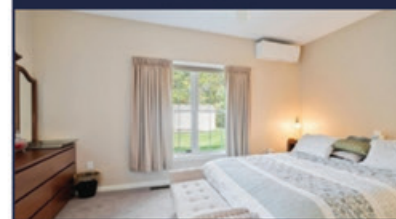
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FOOD PANTRY

continued from page 1

of 2026.

Does that mean fewer people are hungry? Not if you talk to the folks at the Franklin Food Pantry. They are seeing a record rise in hungry neighbors coming through their doors.

“Based on our most recent numbers for fiscal year July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026 the number of people we served increased by 28%. Children served increased up by 35%, from,” says Tina Powderly, Executive Director of Franklin Food Pantry. That translates from 502 children to 678 from one fiscal year to the next, she explains.

“We believe the SNAP data from the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) doesn’t tell the full picture,” says Powderly, “We would caution people to interpret that in context of what is happening on the ground. What we’re seeing is that there is the highest need, historically, in a really long time.”

The number of households

coming through Franklin Food Pantry doors went from 898 in FY25 to 1123 in FY26.

“The reality of what people are facing in terms of food insecurity is entirely different from what you would see on numbers on a piece of paper,” says Powderly, “People aren’t leaving SNAP because they’re ok; people are still hungry. Our day-to-day experience shows that the people who aren’t accessing SNAP still need food, and that’s why we’re here.”

“What we’re seeing is that there is the highest need, historically, in a really long time.” - Tina Powderly, Executive Director, Franklin Food Pantry

Many of the Franklin Food Pantry’s clientele complain they are unable to reach DTA to maintain their eligibility.

“All of our clients who are trying to work with DTA have been challenged to submit paperwork or recertify,” notes Powderly, “There are many who can’t get through to get the paperwork in. The bureaucracy is harder to navigate, and there are people who have to certify who never

had to before, like veterans who now have to jump through additional hoops to verify.”

According to the NPR report, “under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, more adults need to prove they work or volunteer for at least 80 hours a month to access food benefits. These work requirements now apply to veterans, homeless individuals, young adults aging out of foster care, parents with a child between 14 and 17, and people between 55 and 64.”

With an increased amount of paperwork needed and difficulty getting through to DTA, the Franklin Food Pantry has applied and been accepted to be a SNAP Outreach Partner to help their clients navigate the red tape. This joint program of the DTA and the University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School offers participating organizations federal funds for SNAP outreach access, training, and technical assistance. SNAP Outreach Partners will be able to help folks complete SNAP applications, gather verifications, undergo approval processes, complete SNAP Interim reports, complete recertification and help with case assistance. Franklin Food Pantry Client Services Manager, Laura Du, will undergo the training this month to be ready to assist clients starting in October.



The Franklin Food Pantry has seen a 28% rise in clientele in the number of people it serves from FY25 to FY26 and an increase of 35% among children. Starting in October, it will be a trained SNAP Outreach Partner to help clients navigate increased red tape in DTA recertification. Photos used with permission of Franklin Food Pantry

Powderly explains, “It’s a very big deal to become a SNAP Outreach Partner. There are only five others in Norfolk County.”

Seeing literal pounds of food out the door increase from 626,000 to 816,600, the Franklin Food Pantry has also been working on streamlining its website and Amazon Wishlist and is looking to hire new staff in the warehouse to handle the

physical demand.

“Because of this increase in demand, and because we’re now putting out close to a million pounds of food and goods, we are also looking for more warehousing space in our community,” says Powderly, adding, “The need is heartbreaking. We are setting ourselves up to handle this incoming wave of need.”

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Blood crisis persists, donors needed now

BOSTON, Mass. - The American Red Cross continues to urge donors of all blood types to act now and make an appointment to give blood or platelets amid the ongoing national blood crisis. Just three additional donors at every blood drive could help further stabilize the blood supply and ensure patients continue receiving lifesaving care.

Since issuing only the second blood crisis in Red Cross history in late July, thousands of generous donors have stepped up to help save lives. At the same time, the blood supply remains under severe pressure, just as many communities transition to back-to-school schedules. When fewer donors are available to give, the impact on available lifesaving blood products can be significant — espe-

cially when the blood supply is already facing a low.

Keep up the momentum and help reverse the blood crisis. Book an appointment to give blood now by using the Blood Donor App, visiting RedCrossBlood.org or calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767). Those who are unable to donate can still make an impact by encouraging eligible friends, family members and colleagues to give blood.

Thursday, Sept. 3
Franklin Elks, 1077 Pond St., Franklin, 1-6 p.m.

Plainridge Park Casino, 301 Washington St., Plainville, 11 a.m.- 4 p.m.

Friday, Sept. 4
Milford Regional Medical Center, 14 Prospect St., Milford, 12-5 p.m.

Encompass Fitness, 27 Mil-

liston Rd., Millis, 12-5 p.m.

Saturday, Sept. 5
Norfolk Center for Active Living, 28 Medway Branch Rd., Norfolk, 9 a.m.- 2 p.m.

Thursday, Sept. 17
Franklin Elks, 1077 Pond St., Franklin, 1-6 p.m.

Friday, Sept. 18
Framingham Fire Dept., 10 Loring Dr., Framingham, 9 a.m.- 2 p.m.

Saturday, Sept. 19
St. Joseph Parish, 145 Holliston St., Medway, 9 a.m.- 2 p.m.

Monday, Sept. 21
Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Saturday, Sept. 26
First Unitarian Universalist Church of Milford, 23 Pine St., Milford, 9 a.m.- 2 p.m.

Bike and Helmet Safety accessible event September 12

Local children's book author and artist Ali Rheume, Rep. Jeff Roy and the Franklin Police Department invite folks of all ages to a Bike and Helmet Safety Event on Saturday, September 12, 2026 at Franklin High School parking lot, 218 Oak St., Franklin.

their own bike helmets for a fit check as well.

Accessible parking is available in adjacent lots, and organizers request attendees to skip wearing fragrance that day. In addition, grounds are paved, adaptive bikes are available for use, tables have wheelchair spaces, coloring supplies will have adaptive options and there will be no music or flashing lights for sensory accommodation.

Anyone who needs additional accommodations, reach out to Ali Rheume at arheume10@gmail.com or 508-455-5687 for call, text, or video chat.

The event will take place from 9:30-11 a.m. and will include:

- free helmet giveaway
- free bike raffle
- bike course to ride through
- coloring table
- helmet decorating
- fire truck
- vendor tables

In addition, attendees will have a chance to purchase a signed copy of Rheume's book, "Buddy the Brain."

Folks are welcome to bring



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Family-Run Affordable Junk Removal Takes the Stress Out of Cleanups

BY CHRISTIE VOGT
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Whether it's one old fridge in the garage or an entire home of unwanted goods, the team at Affordable Junk Removal offers a cost-efficient, stress-free approach to waste management. "You don't lift a finger," says owner Jason Schadler, who started the company along with his wife Christine in 2005.

The business offers same-day service for both residential and commercial clients across eastern and central Massachusetts and northern Rhode Island. In addition to junk removal, the company rents 15-yard dumpsters.

As a family-owned and operated company, Schadler says Affordable Junk Removal has lower overhead costs and is more accessible than national competitors. "I answer my phone 24 hours a day," he says. "I was on vacation in Italy and Portugal, and I was still answering my phone on the beach. When you call us, you get me — not an automated machine!"

Schadler says the company

has an environmentally friendly approach to disposal in which it recycles items when possible and properly disposes of non-recyclables. "We have four kids and sustainability is extremely important to us."

During the business's early days, Schadler provided junk removal on nights and weekends when he wasn't busy working at a machine shop. Eventually, the business grew into a full-time endeavor, and the Schadlers invested back into the company with new equipment and techniques. "When I first started, for example, we didn't have any tarps. I'm driving around and things are flying out of my truck," Schadler laughs. "I'm like, 'Oh my god, I need a tarp.'"

Schadler says his wife Christine "was equally as involved" in getting the business off the ground. "She handled the back-end while I did the heavy lifting, all while she was working at EMC," he says. "Fast forward 21 years, and we both work full time managing the company as well as other endeavors. Business is doing great; it has grown



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tremendously to a fleet of trucks and dumpsters, and we've also been able to buy a pizza place, The Corner Market in Holliston."

In addition to delivering an in-demand service to the community, Schadler is appreciative that Affordable Junk Removal has helped provide a work-life balance that suits his family. "It allows me to be able to do what I like doing and spend time with my kids," he says. "I'm home to see my babies play softball and do all that stuff. We are also able to give back to the communities we serve."



Christine and Jason Schadler, shown here with their children, started Affordable Junk Removal in 2005.

As for Franklin in particular, Schadler says they are proud to have many repeat customers and friends in the area. The Schadlers' oldest daughter lives in Franklin, and their kids attended softball camp and learned how to skate in town. Prior to starting Affordable Junk Removal, Christine worked for years in Franklin as well.

One of the best parts of his job, Schadler says, is meeting

and getting to know new people and developing relationships with returning customers. "We are really grateful for the repeat business and the chance to form connections with residents across the MetroWest area," he says.

To receive a free junk removal estimate, call 774-287-1133 or visit affordablejunkremoval.com.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Franklin Art Association to welcome abstract artist Lenny Moskowitz October 7

The Franklin Art Association warmly welcomes the public to its meeting at 6:30 p.m. at

the Franklin Senior Center on Wednesday, October 7. The program will feature Lenny

Moskowitz who will explore a painterly, abstract approach to landscape with a focus on atmosphere, light and spatial depth.

Lenny teaches at various art centers in New England and exhibits regionally. He taught at Quinnipiac University for 15 years and continues to enjoy doing demonstrations for art associations. He likes to approach a painting without a preconceived idea of what the final work should look like, and thrives on surprise!

All programs are free and open to the public. Coffee and snacks will be served at the intermission, where you will have a chance to meet and speak with the artist.

The Art Association is supported by grants from the Franklin Cultural Council which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council and the Franklin Cultural District.

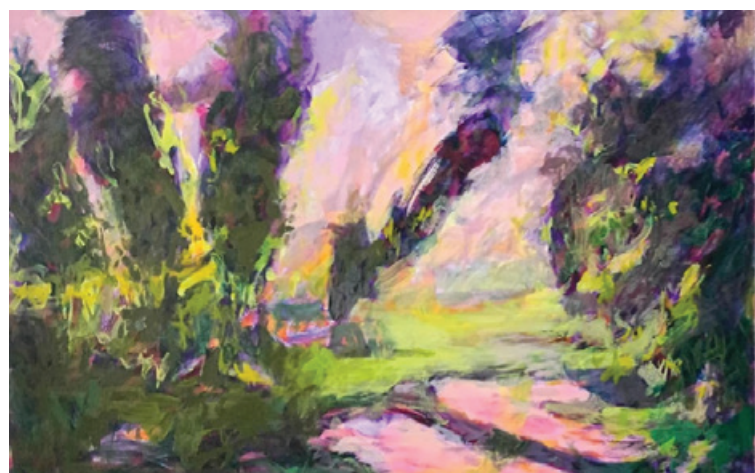
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Neurodivergence is often underrepresented in societal culture. Recognizing the need for inclusion rather than exclusion, Milford’s Libby Lit created Unified Theater, an Adaptive Arts program at the Hopkinton Center for the Arts.

“It’s for anyone,” says Lit, of the adaptive classes. Theatre lovers of all abilities are welcome, but the program serves “the entire spectrum of neurodiversity, from things like ADHD and Global Development delay, to Autism and Down Syndrome.” People with high level needs can participate, even alongside neurotypical players. Lit even sees a few such sibling pairs taking part.

According to Smile Givers International, “Art can provide a platform for self-expression, communication, emotional regulation, and social connections.” Noah George of Ashland can attest to this. Since he has participated in HCA’s Unified Theater’s, Noah states he has indeed become more outgoing and confident, “I enjoy having fun with the whole group and have many friends, now.”

Libby never considered working with people with disabilities until, by chance, she took a job in special education. She went on to earn her masters in Theater Education from Emerson, where, during her student teaching at Milford High, she developed a theatre arts curriculum

for individuals with profound needs.

“There was a lack of opportunity for these individuals to express themselves in a way that was uniquely theirs and not scripted,” says Lit, noting that many programs meant to help folks with severe needs to find gainful employment “so often, look at the disability and not the whole person, and a lot of times, these individuals end up in a job that doesn’t reflect them. These are actual people with actual interests, and we can build on those interests.”

Hopedale’s Kelsie Duest, who has Down Syndrome, loves to dance, and she shines as a Unified Theater performer. Her Mom Sharon expressed, with emotion, how the program also gives caretakers the opportunity to unite. “It’s nice to be surrounded with like parents. We bond and build our sense of community together” she voiced.

Lit passionately rejects a one-size-fits-all approach to arts programming for people who have severe needs, as they, like everyone else, have a breadth of personalities. The Unified Arts program, she says, “honors the individual and their form of self-expression. We don’t just have singers, we have pianists, percussionists, we have a person who works backstage.” Participants can freely be themselves, and many, she says, take their craft very seriously.

Andy Pandy, from Franklin, for example, became Libby’s Associate Director for his backstage

skills. Working with him, Libby discovered Andy’s writing talent, and she’s now planning to have him do some script writing for their next show in December. Andy’s Mom, Jaya, says that it puts a smile on her face watching her son participate.

“They get to put their whole heart into this production they make themselves, and in the end, you get something made by them, uniquely for them, that honors their contribution to society,” says Lit.

Heart was certainly evident as Sam Cerulli of Holliston gave an emotional performance of Bill Withers’ “Lean on Me,” at June’s “Put A Little Love In Your Heart” production. The entire cast joined her on stage with the audience chanting along in a moving, once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Unified Theater and its core principle, “Choose to Include” creates more accessible and equitable opportunities in the arts for people with disabilities and neurodiversity.

“My hope with this Adaptive Arts program is that all people who are interested in the arts have fair and equitable access to the arts. It’s time we start looking at the opportunities and the growth the arts can provide,” says Libby, who says that although writing adaptive curriculum can be challenging, working with these arts students is the greatest joy of her life.

For more information on Unified Theater, or to volunteer, email Libby at libby@

hopartscenter.org, or contact Hopkinton Center for Performing Arts at (508) 435-9222 or info@HopArtsCenter.org.



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On the left is Sam Cerulli, shown with her sister, Madeline, both from Holliston. Sam is a singer and actor in the HCA Unified Theater program, an Adaptive Arts program that gives performers a chance to express their true selves.

Kelsie Duest, who loves to dance, is shown here with her mom, Sharon. Of Hopedale, each find the Unified Arts program rewarding.

Franklin's September 26th Harvest Festival

Full of fun, food and music

Franklin's 24th Annual Harvest Festival is set for Sat., Sept. 26, 12 noon to 5 p.m. Rain date is Sun., Sept. 27. Like last year's festival it will extend up Main Street with more vendors and activities at Dean College and Franklin Library.

Main Street will be busy with more than 130 booths and thousands of visitors from Franklin and beyond. Come and enjoy live music and dance performers, lots of food choices, children's activities, unique artwork and crafts, merch and services from local businesses, and meet local community groups. Celebrate the golden end of summer and get ready for the vibrant

colors of autumn. Franklin Downtown Partnership organizes the festival. "The Harvest Festival is the ideal time to socialize, relax, and enjoy the community spirit," said Kevin Johnson, Harvest Festival Chair. "Each year we try to add something different and recently we have expanded further north on Main Street. It is a special day."

Here are some highlights:

- Live music performances by the Padula Family Band and Critical Mass. Dance performances by Feet in Motion, Desi Swag Queens and Franklin School of Performing Arts (FSPA).

- Touch-a-Truck, courtesy of Franklin Fire.
- Radio station MyFM will broadcast live from Main Street near the center island/bridge. In partnership with the FDP, Franklin TV & WFPR 102.9 FM will broadcast live near the library.
- Franklin Library will have children's activities on the lawn.
- Dean College will have activities on the quad.
- Franklin Historical Museum will be sharing info and Franklin-themed items at the Cultural Hub.
- Great food all along Main Street. Dean Bank will be selling apple cider and donuts, popcorn and water. Proceeds from their sales support FDP and the festival. Take a few extra steps to downtown and you can enjoy more restaurants and cafes.



- Downtown activities: the Children's Museum of Franklin will have kid-friendly fun at their home at 157 Cottage Street.

The Harvest Festival is made possible because of generous local business sponsors. Franklin Downtown Partnership is very grateful to this year's sponsors:

- Platinum** – Dean Bank; G&C Plumbing & Heating, Local Town Pages
- Gold** – Dean College; Glen Meadow Apartments; Middlesex Savings Bank; Sunrise Montessori School
- Silver** – Doherty, Dugan, Cannon, Raymond & Weil, P.C.; Eagle Stainless Tube &

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For festival updates and to stay in the know about activities throughout the year follow the FDP on Instagram and Facebook:
<https://www.instagram.com/franklindowntownpartnership/> and
<https://www.facebook.com/franklindowntownpartnership.org/>





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Your Money, Your Independence

Navigating college admissions with financial planning



Glenn Brown, CFP

If you have a high school junior or senior, the college admissions process can quickly turn into an overwhelming blur of deadlines, application choices, and financial decisions. From understanding application timing to navigating shifting loan rules, every choice you make now directly impacts your family's broader financial plan.

Early Action vs. Early Decision

Let's start with the early application process with various October deadlines, and how choosing between Early Action and Early Decision carries financial implications.

Early Action gives your student an early decision without a binding commitment, letting them apply to several schools and compare actual financial aid offers. Early Decision is a binding agreement. While it can give an admissions edge at certain selective institutions, it strips away your leverage to negotiate financial aid later. If your family chooses the binding route, merit aid conversations must happen prior, not after the application.

Build Merit-Based Relationships

When targeting merit-based aid, looking beyond "trophy" schools is often where the real money is hiding. Highly competitive universities rarely offer deep merit scholarships because their applicant pools are overflowing. Instead, consider specialized or regional colleges where your student's academic profile places them in the top 20% of applicants. Encourage your teenager to lead conversations, build relationships with local recruiters, and express genuine interest. Admissions teams want to hear an authentic student

voice—not a sales pitch polished by Mom or Dad.

Manage Your 529 Plan

For families who have spent years funding a 529 plan, junior year in high school is the time to start protecting that growth. Consider shifting a portion of those funds into money market instruments so market dips do not force a bad exit right when tuition bills arrive. Tax-free withdrawals must go toward qualified education expenses like tuition, mandatory fees, and room and board. If you end up overfunding the account, SECURE 2.0 rules allow families to roll up to \$35,000 of leftover 529 funds directly into a Roth IRA for the student, provided the account has been open for at least 15 years. It serves as a great safety valve that turns unused college money into a head start on retirement.

Fast Track The FAFSA

Make sure to submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as early as possible once it opens in the fall. Prioritizing early completion gives your family first-come,

first-served access to state-level grants, institutional aid, and federal work-study funds that frequently run out before general admissions deadlines.

Sequencing Your Loans

The biggest shift comes from last year's student loan reform, when open-ended federal parent borrowing officially ended. Congress placed a hard annual limit of \$20,000 and a lifetime cumulative cap of \$65,000 per dependent child on Parent PLUS loans. Direct undergraduate student loan limits remain capped at \$5,500 to \$12,500 annually. Because a four-year university can easily exceed that \$65,000 federal ceiling, families need a proactive borrowing plan:

- Pace the \$65,000 Parent PLUS cap evenly across all four years (\$16,250 annually) rather than borrowing \$20,000 upfront and hitting a wall by senior year.
- Combine lower-interest Direct student loans first, ensuring your teenager maxes out their federal loan eligibility before parents assume debt.
- Target colleges with generous institutional grants, prioritiz-

ing schools whose net price calculators reveal strong aid packages that minimize reliance on parent debt. Aligning your child's educational goals with a realistic, well-paced funding strategy ensures they get a great degree without compromising your own retirement. If you are balancing application timelines with your household wealth plan, reach out to your Certified Financial Planner to map out a custom college roadmap. *The opinions voiced in this material are for general information only and are not intended to provide specific advice or recommendations for any individual.* Glenn Brown is a Holliston resident and owner of PlanDynamic, LLC, www.PlanDynamic.com. Glenn is a fee-only Certified Financial Planner™ helping motivated people take control of their planning and investing, so they can balance kids, aging parents and financial independence. *Sponsored articles are submitted by our advertisers. The advertiser is solely responsible for the content of this article.*

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The b.LUXE *beauty beat*

Why Is Everyone at b.LUXE?

Inside One of Massachusetts' Highest-Rated Salons

By GINA WOELFEL

September is the Unofficial "Back To Yourself" Season.

After a summer of loose schedules, salt air and increasingly optional beauty routines, September brings the urge to feel pulled together again. That return to yourself is what b.LUXE has always been about.

Meanwhile, at the Studio...

On any given day, more than 30 beauty professionals are cutting hair, mixing color, giving facials, applying makeup, fitting wigs and toppers, consulting with guests and learning from one another. Fifteen years in, hair is still at the heart of b.LUXE. It simply has more company now: advanced therapeutic skincare, private wig and topper services and a new generation of artists building their careers. More than 1,000 Google reviews have helped make b.LUXE one of the highest-rated salons in Massachusetts. We're proud of that number. Even prouder of what it represents. Each one came from a guest who thought their experience was worth sharing.

It Still Starts with Really Good Hair

Hair has always been the foundation of b.LUXE Studio. Our team specializes in precision cutting, custom color, extensions, smoothing services, scalp care and conditioning treatments. Every b.LUXE artist receives advanced education in cutting, coloring and treatments for all hair lengths and textures, from short hair and long layers to curls, razor cuts and clipper cuts. Your hair also has to work outside the salon.

You shouldn't need three brushes, four products, two free hours and the upper-body strength of a professional athlete to recreate it. Really good hair should still be really good when you're the one doing it.

The Next Generation Is Taking Appointments

September has always carried a certain back-to-school energy, and our apprentices understand that better than anyone. Apprentice Stylists Jenni, Anneliese and Kendall have officially joined our booking menu, offering blowouts, haircuts, color and foiling under the guidance of b.LUXE's experienced mentors and educators. We know a college budget and great hair are not natural allies.

We have a solution.

A model wash, cut and style starts at \$35. Color services start at \$40. Face-frame foils start at \$65, partial foils at \$85 and full foils at \$105! Foiling services include a color balance and blow-dry, too. These are full salon appointments, not practice sessions tucked away after hours. Each includes a consultation, completed service and senior-educator check-ins along the way. It is smart beauty math. For students heading back to campus, families watching fall expenses and anyone who appreciates b.LUXE hair at apprentice pricing, the numbers work.

Extensions Are Not What They Used to Be

The words "hair extensions" once suggested very long, dramatic results. Now, many of our guests choose extensions for reasons other than length. They want fullness through the sides, added density or the return of

volume their hair used to have. We still love a dramatic makeover. Today's extensions can be placed and blended to look completely natural. A consultation covers the method, color, placement and upkeep before a single extension is added.

Wigs & Toppers: BEAUTIFULLY YOU

Our wig and topper services began with owner Heather Cohen, who understands hair loss because she has experienced it herself. She knows that finding alternative hair is not simply a matter of selecting a color and placing an order. You want it to look natural. You want it to feel comfortable.

Mostly, you want to recognize yourself again. Our private consultations give you room to ask questions, try different options and receive honest guidance. We work with guests experiencing thinning, alopecia, medical hair loss and changes in density. Consultations are available in person and virtually for our non-local guests. Every piece is selected, fitted, cut and styled with the same care and attention as every b.LUXE hair service. We have also given wigs and toppers a home of their own at bluxewigs.com. Online retail is coming soon!

The Quieter Side of b.LUXE

Beyond the energy of the salon, behind the spa room doors, the pace changes. The light softens, the music settles into the background, and your phone stays blissfully silent in your bag. For once, you have nowhere else to be. Our G.M. Collin Master Certified Estheticians, Corinn and Monique, offer customized facials, chemical peels, waxing and lash services, with specialized care that includes oncology therapeutic skincare and Reiki facials.



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THE NEXT GENERATION IS TAKING APPOINTMENTS



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You may leave with brighter skin and a better home-care plan. You may also leave wondering why you waited so long to let someone take care of you. **Back to You** September is not about reinvention. It is a return to the routines that make you feel like yourself, just as the busiest three months of the year begin. Maybe that's why everyone is here. For their hair. Their skin.

Their makeup. Their confidence. Turns out, there is more than one way back to yourself. Book your next appointment at bluxe.com, or visit bluxewigs.com to learn more about wigs, toppers and private consultations. PAID ADVERTISEMENT *Sponsored articles are submitted by our advertisers. The advertiser is solely responsible for the content of this article.*

Fire!

Fire prevention week, starting Oct. 4, harkens to Great Chicago Fire of 1871

By NATALEE WEBB-RUBINO

In the early days of America, firefighting relied entirely on people power. When a fire broke out, the community would form a line from their local water source and pass along buckets of water up the line to the fire to douse the flames, the Bucket Brigade. The task was slow, water was limited, and it was ineffective against large fires. By the 1800s, fire was a constant threat in densely populated cities with buildings made of wood with thatched rooftops.

The mid-1800s produced the first organized firefighting apparatus, the hand-pumped Fire Engine. It was a simple cart pulled by men or horses with a manual pump the firefighters would use to continuously spray water onto the fire to put it out. (In fact, you can see one at Niagara Hall in the nearby town of Millis.) But this too had its downfalls, as it required several firefighters to manually pump the water, relied on a nearby water source and had limited range and water pressure. At that time, the Chicago Fire Department had 185 firefighters with just 17 horse-drawn steam pumpers to protect an entire city with a population over 300,000! Chicago was unprepared for the horrors it would encounter due to this lack of fire protection.

Throughout the summer in 1871 Chicago had been hot, windy, and dry. That fall was particularly parched with intense winds whipping throughout the city. Chicago had been built with widespread use of wooden construction

in its buildings, sidewalks, and streets, all made of pine. At the O’Leary homestead on the evening of October 8th a fire began in their small barn on West DeKoven Street. A lantern had been knocked over igniting the Great Chicago Fire. The fire quickly spread amongst the wooden structures into the urban and business districts of Chicago, becoming the most destructive urban disaster in American history. The fire had destroyed over 3 square miles of the city decimating 17,500 buildings, leaving 100,000 residents homeless, and it was deadly. Although 150 bodies were recovered, the coroner determined over 300 citizens had perished, the other bodies incinerated.

On the one-year anniversary of the catastrophic fire, Fire Prevention Week was instituted in Chicago on October 8, 1872. (online sources: “The Great Chicago Fire of 1871,” “Bucket Brigade,” “The Great Chicago Fire,” “Library of Congress”).

The Fire Marshals Association of North America sponsored the first National Fire Prevention Day in 1911, the 40th anniversary of the fire. It was a day to keep the public informed about the importance of fire prevention and its deadly consequences. In 1925 President Calvin Coolidge proclaimed Fire Prevention Week to be held from Sunday to Sunday during the week October 8th falls on in memorial of the Great Chicago Fire.

Massachusetts initiated a statewide grant program in 1994 to give Firefighters the ability to teach fire safety education from Pre-K through



Fire Prevention Week begins October 4 this year, and its observation dates back to 1872, one year after the Great Chicago Fire, which decimated over three square miles of the city. Library of Congress photo.

High School and to Senior Citizens. It was dubbed S.A.F.E. or Student Awareness of Fire Education. In its first year, child fire deaths fell from 25 in 1994 to 12 the following year. Over the next 25 years child deaths declined by 78% including zero cases reported in 2020 with 383 children receiving the “Young Heroes” award for their use of classroom fire safety lessons.

The S.A.F.E. program instructs children on fire safety that empowers them to prevent fires, survive those that do occur, and respond correctly to fires and emergencies. Crucial components of the program include smoke alarm maintenance, home escape plans, how to crawl low under smoke, the Stop-Drop-Roll method, and match/lighter safety, along with

kitchen fires and burn safety. Doug Perro, a Firefighter-Paramedic with Group 2 of the Franklin Fire Department is our town’s S.A.F.E. Officer who instructs students on fire safety and survival skills. For senior citizens, he inspects their smoke and carbon monoxide detectors replacing batteries if needed and will identify hazards in these elder residences. Doug also coordinates community outreach with local schools for student mentorship and training projects.

Firefighter Perro reminds us, “Fire Prevention Week starts October 4th this year.” Its theme is “Charge into Fire Safety, Safe Charging Is a Superpower!” The theme addresses the fire risks and explosions of lithium-ion batteries.

If you would like to know more about the Massachusetts S.A.F.E. program contact the State at SAFE.FireSafety-Division@mass.gov. Locally you may contact S.A.F.E. officer Doug Perro at dperro@FranklinMA.gov or SAFE@FranklinMA.gov



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LIVING HEALTHY

A new treatment option for dry macular degeneration

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

For decades, telling a patient they had dry macular degeneration meant delivering some of the most difficult news in eye care. I would sit across from patients worried about losing their ability to read, drive, or enjoy time with family, and explain that we had very few treatment options.

The advice was always the same: take appropriate vitamins, don't smoke, maintain a healthy lifestyle, monitor your vision, and come in for regular exams. Beyond that, our approach was largely one of careful observation. We were managing the disease as best we could, but we had little to offer in terms of active treatment.

Today, that paradigm is changing.

generation, affecting millions of Americans. Unlike wet AMD, for which effective injectable treatments have been available for nearly two decades, patients with earlier stages of dry AMD historically had no treatment specifically designed to address the disease itself. While the AREDS2 vitamin formulation can reduce the risk of progression in certain patients, active treatment options remained severely limited.

However, in November 2024, the FDA authorized the Valeda® Light Delivery System for the treatment of dry AMD. Valeda utilizes a technology called **photobiomodulation (PBM)**, offering a noninvasive approach for appropriately selected patients with intermediate dry AMD before the development of advanced geographic atrophy.

other medical fields for wound healing and inflammation, its application in ophthalmology is a major milestone.

PBM uses carefully controlled wavelengths of red and near-infrared light delivered to the retina during a series of brief, painless office treatments. The light is absorbed by mitochondria—the energy-producing structures within cells. Researchers believe this process supports cellular metabolism while reducing the oxidative stress and inflammation that drive the progression of macular degeneration.

The standard treatment protocol consists of nine short sessions performed over approximately three to five weeks. Based on clinical trials, additional treatment series may be recommended periodically.



A new option for dry AMD
Dry age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is the most common form of macular de-

What is photobiomodulation?
While light-based therapies have been used for years in

What does the research show?
The LIGHTSITE III clinical trial evaluated photobiomodu-

lation in patients with intermediate dry AMD over two years. The results were highly encouraging:

- **Improved vision:** Patients receiving PBM experienced an average improvement in visual acuity compared to those who received a sham treatment.
- **Measurable gains:** More than 60% of treated eyes gained at least five letters on the standard ETDRS visual acuity chart.
- **Slower progression:** The study suggested that treated patients may experience lower rates of progression to advanced geographic atrophy.
- **Safety:** The treatment was well tolerated with no significant safety concerns identified.

A note of caution: Photobiomodulation is not a cure, and it does not guarantee improved vision for every patient. As an ophthalmologist, I believe in balancing optimism with reality. Patients deserve accurate information and realistic expectations, not exaggerated promises.

Who is a candidate?
Patient selection is critical. Current evidence and FDA authorization focus specifically on patients with **intermediate dry AMD**. Determining whether this treatment is appropriate requires a comprehensive eye examination, detailed retinal imaging, and an individualized evaluation by an ophthalmolo-

gist or retina specialist.

What this means for you
If you were told years ago that there was "nothing to do" for your dry AMD, it is time to have another conversation with your eye doctor. PBM does not replace the fundamentals of care—patients must still take vitamins, avoid smoking, and undergo regular monitoring—but it offers a powerful new tool in our arsenal.

At Milford Franklin Eye Center, we are proud to be the fourth center in Massachusetts—and the only one in our local area—to offer photobiomodulation therapy with the Valeda system through our Franklin office.

We are also proud to provide comprehensive, on-site retina specialty care through Dr. Alyse Richard, a highly trained retina specialist dedicated to advanced, patient-centered care for complex retinal conditions.

After many years of simply monitoring dry AMD, I am grateful we finally have more to offer. If you or a loved one has been diagnosed with dry AMD, contact Milford Franklin Eye Center today to schedule a comprehensive retinal evaluation.

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LIVING HEALTHY

West Nile Virus has been detected in the Franklin area

VIA FRANKLIN HEATH DEPT (FIRST PUBLISHED ON FRANKLIN MATTERS)

Mosquito-borne illnesses like West Nile Virus (WNV) and Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) can pose a risk during mosquito season.

Why it matters:

- People can get sick from the bite of an infected mosquito.
- Symptoms of the mild illness can include fever, fatigue, aches and joint pain. Severe illness can include high fever, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, muscle weakness, vision loss, numbness, and paralysis
- Risk of severe illness increases with age or if you have a chronic medical condition or weakened immune system.

To avoid getting sick from the bite of an infected mosquito, health officials recommend

- Using an EPA-registered mosquito repellent
- Avoiding outdoors from dusk to dawn when mosquitos are most active
- Wearing long, loose-fitting shirts and pants
- Using screens on windows and doors or air conditioning

The state’s interactive tracking tool lets you click or hover over your town to see the current risk level, updated throughout the active mosquito season (June–October).

Check your local risk level: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-arbovirus-update>

Franklin teams show up to fight cancer

The Pan-Mass Challenge weekend took place on August 1-2, 2026. Shown are Team Gavin, which rides in honor of Gavin Beaulieu, a Franklin resident who passed away last year from leukemia at just 11 years old. The team’s captain is Gavin’s father, Derek Beaulieu.

Team Phat Tuesday also participated, shown here with their Pedal Partner, Finn Pattison, and the Pedal Partner’s family, brother, Harry, and parents, Dan and Caity, at the Pedal Partner tent in Lakeville, Mass. This Franklin-based team has been riding for decades and cumulatively has raised more than \$6.5 million for the PMC.



Team Gavin



Team Phat Tuesday

Photos used courtesy of Pan-Mass Challenge.

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The Value of Teen Volunteering

Giving back to the community is a great way for teenagers to develop career and life skills, in addition to experiencing a mental health boost. Teenagers face academic and social pressures, and research indicates that focusing on others can enhance happiness and emotional well-being; while nurturing qualities that will serve them well in their education and professional pursuits.

Good things happen to those who volunteer!

1. Build confidence & self-esteem: Doing good things for others can help create a feeling of greater self-worth because it can provide a sense of pride in one's accomplishments. Students can see first-hand how their actions have an impact.

2. Increase empathy: When teens volunteer, they learn that other people's lives can be very different from their own. By helping others with different life experiences, teens not only gain a deeper understanding of others but also learn to respect them, cultivating a heightened sense of social awareness.

3. Identify your sense of purpose: Volunteering can help teens develop a sense of

purpose. As an example, a teen volunteers to help a local official run for election, they learn first-hand how a team effort can create positive change, which then fuels their motivation to major in a similar area of study.

4. Earn stronger grades: Volunteering can help a teenager achieve stronger grades. According to the United Way, "There is a positive correlation between students who earn good grades and those who are involved in community service. Volunteering also helps teens gain new skills necessary for the job market such as leadership, communication skills, dependability, time management, and decision making."

5. Strengthen your college application: Volunteer experience promotes collaboration, resourcefulness, and initiative. Studies show that teen volunteers have a higher level of maturity and compassion than their peers who do not volunteer. Colleges love to see a student engage in their community and show impact. So, whatever you do, do it consistently and do something you are enthusiastic about - it shows.

Ways to get involved!

1. Ask yourself one ques-

tion: If you could help solve one problem, what would you choose, and how could you help? The problem could pertain to global issues, high school concerns, or local community needs. This simple question has prompted such insightful and mature answers among my students. The act of volunteering becomes significantly more fulfilling when driven by a genuine passion for a cause - which can often extend its influence into other aspects of life.

2. A few Volunteer Resources:

a. Teenlife.com: a great website to find a broad range of volunteer opportunities.

b. Dosomething.org: created in 1993 with the vision that volunteerism can be as cool as sports.

c. People making a difference (pmd.org): Their vision is for everyone to be able to volunteer productively a few times a year so that together people can make a real difference.

d. Idealist.org/Volunteer-match: matches inspired people with inspiring causes.

e. Volunteer Match Quiz - <https://www.yourfreecareertest.com/career-tests/volunteer-match-test>. It will analyze the student's answers, and identify



Maryline Michel Kulewicz and Tracy Sullivan of College 101 Admissions Consultants

potential volunteer opportunities that match their interests.

3. Do-it-yourself activities: Create a list of local volunteer activities that could be done with a friend. Suggestions include caring for a neighbor's pet, grocery shopping for an elderly neighbor or sick friend, tutoring classmates or younger students, running a mini summer camp offering an activity you love to do, volunteering for a cause that's dear to your heart, collecting items for the local food pantry, or visiting with a family member that lives alone. Email tracy@mycollege101.com for a FREE resource.

4. Get approval: It is important to always ask permission from a parent or guardian before you start any

volunteer activity.

One of my favorite quotes is from Margeret Mead, Anthropologist, who was truly ahead of her time: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

Good luck and enjoy the journey!

College 101 Admissions Consultants LLC. Website: www.mycollege101.com. Email: tracy@mycollege101.com. Phone: 508-380-3845.

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First Universalist Society in Franklin welcomes new minister

The Rev. Chris Scheller, the new minister at the First Universalist Society in Franklin, will be preaching his first service on Sept. 13, 2026. Prior to joining FUSE, Rev. Chris was the

Minister of Community Life and Learning at the UU Church of Greater Lynn. He brings a deep knowledge of adult faith formation and extensive training in leading spiritual practices drawn from Buddhist, Christian, earth-based, and other traditions, in addition to his active commitment to social justice and anti-oppression work. You are cordially invited to join us for worship and a reception afterwards.

The First Universalist Society in Franklin (FUSF) is a Unitarian Universalist Welcoming Congregation located at 262 Chestnut Street, Franklin. For more information, please



contact us at info@fusf.org or call 508-528-5348.

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Franklin Fire Department promotes Mike Berthiaume to Captain

FRANKLIN, Mass. — The Franklin Fire Department is pleased to announce the promotion of Mike Berthiaume to in July 2026 as captain of Group 3 at Station 2.

Captain Berthiaume joined the Franklin Fire Department in May 2015 as a firefighter/paramedic. He was promoted to lieutenant in July 2023 and began serving as acting captain in October 2025 before this permanent promotion.

Throughout his career with the Franklin Fire Department, Captain Berthiaume has served as a field training officer and assistant fire investigator. He is certified as a Fire Officer I/II, Incident Safety Officer and Hazardous Materials Operational Level Responder.

Prior to joining the Franklin Fire Department, Captain Berthiaume served for two years as a firefighter/paramedic

with the Town of Bourne, where he was awarded the Massachusetts State Medal of Valor in 2015 for his actions during an active shooter incident. He also served as a call lieutenant with the Amherst Fire Department.

Captain Berthiaume holds a master's degree in emergency services management from Columbia Southern University and a bachelor's degree from the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

The Franklin Fire Department



ment congratulates Captain Berthiaume on his promotion and thanks him for his continued service and leadership.

Franklin Rotary Club 10th Annual Car Show, Saturday, October 3

Event at New England Chapel accepting sponsors through Sept. 11

The Franklin Rotary Club & New England Chapel 10th Annual Car Show is slated for October 3, 2026, from 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m., located at the New England Chapel, 300 Central Street, Franklin, MA 02038.

Registration is \$20 per car, and entry is FREE for spectators. This show features: Food, Ice Cream, Air-Conditioned Lounge, Indoor Restrooms & Raffles. This car show welcomes vehicles of all types; Antique, Muscle, Classic, Custom, Motorcycles and out of the norm new cars! Trophies will be awarded at 12:30 p.m. The Rotary Club Car Show has now become a staple of the Franklin Community, and we are proud to offer this event to all.

DEADLINE FOR SPONSORSHIP – FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2026

To register or become a sponsor contact: Gary Convertino at gconvertino@cox.net.

All proceeds to benefit Rotary Club of Franklin, MA community service projects.

Save the Date! Tri-County Regional Chamber auction & comedy fundraiser October 24

Tri-County Regional Chamber has added a comedy element to its annual auction, this year to take place at 6 p.m. on Saturday, October 24, at the Doubletree Hotel in Milford. Comedians Steve Bjork, Mike Koutrobis, and Gianni Saltamacchia will perform, in addition to the exciting auction in support of the chamber. For more information, visit <https://www.tricountychamberma.org/auction>.

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Franklin Public Schools Offers Meals at No Cost for All Students

Franklin Public Schools participates in the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program. As part of this program, Franklin High School, Franklin Middle School, and Lincoln Street Elementary Complex offer healthy meals every school day. The Commonwealth is supplementing National School Lunch Program funds to ensure all students have access to healthy school meals in Massachusetts, regardless of household income. We ask that families complete a Meal Benefit Application as this provides data for school funding and community resources. The results from each Meal Benefit Application is used to ensure sustainability for this program.

Families who qualify for free or reduced-price meals for their children also qualify for Sun Bucks starting in the summer of 2026. Sun Bucks provides extra money for groceries during the summer months when kids aren't in school.

Qualifications for children to receive free or reduced price meals include: belonging to a household whose income is at or below the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines, belonging to a household that receives public assistance, or if the child is homeless, migrant, runaway, foster, or participates in a Head Start or Even Start pre-K program.

Household size and income criteria are used to determine eligibility for free and reduced-price benefits if the household does not receive assistance or the children are not in the other categories mentioned above. Children can get free or reduced-price meals if the household's gross income falls at or below the limits on the Federal Income Eligibility Guideline chart.

FEDERAL ELIGIBILITY INCOME CHART For School Year 2026-2027						
Household size	Maximum Household Income Eligible for Free Meals			Maximum Household Income Eligible for Reduced Price Meals		
	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly
1	\$20,748	\$1,729	\$399	\$29,526	\$2,461	\$568
2	\$28,132	\$2,345	\$541	\$40,034	\$3,337	\$770
3	\$35,516	\$2,960	\$683	\$50,542	\$4,212	\$972
4	\$42,900	\$3,575	\$825	\$61,050	\$5,088	\$1,175
5	\$50,284	\$4,191	\$967	\$71,558	\$5,964	\$1,377
6	\$57,688	\$4,806	\$1,109	\$82,066	\$6,839	\$1,579
7	\$65,052	\$5,421	\$1,251	\$92,574	\$7,715	\$1,781
8	\$72,436	\$6,037	\$1,393	\$103,082	\$8,591	\$1,983
Each additional person:	+7,348	+616	+142	+10,508	+876	+203

To apply for free or reduced-price meals, households can fill out the application and return it to the school unless the household has already received notification that their children are approved for free meals this year. Application forms are being distributed to all households with a letter informing households of the availability of free and reduced-price meals for their children and what is required to complete on the application. **Applications also are available at each school's main office, central office, and online at franklins.net/district/food-services. You may also apply online through the Franklin Public Schools Food Service office website at franklins.net/district/food-services.**

Only one application is required for all children in the household and the information provided on the application will be used for the purpose of determining eligibility and verification of data. Applications may be verified at any time during the school year by the school or other program officials. An application for free or reduced-price benefits cannot be approved unless it contains complete eligibility information as indicated on the application and instructions. In the operation of child feeding programs, no child will be discriminated against because of race, sex, color, national origin, age, or disability.

Families can apply for benefits at any time. If a household member becomes unemployed or if the household size increases, the household should contact the school. Such changes may make the children of the household eligible for benefits if the household's income falls at or below the Federal Guidelines. **Contact Aaron Lenart at lenarta@franklins.net at any time to request an application.**

Under the provisions of the free and reduced-price policy, **Jana Melotti, School Business Administrator, 355 East Central Street, Franklin MA 02038, melottij@franklins.net, or 508-553-4825** will review applications and determine eligibility. Parents or guardians dissatisfied with the ruling of the official may wish to discuss the decision with the determining official on an informal basis. Parents wishing to make a formal appeal for a hearing on the decision may make a request either orally or in writing to **Franklin Public Schools**.

When known to **Franklin Public Schools** households will be notified of their children's eligibility for free meals if they are members of households receiving assistance from the:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP);
- Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR); or
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), if the State program meets Federal standards.

An application is not required for free meal benefits for Assistance Program participants and all the children in the household are eligible for free meal benefits. If any children were not listed on the notice of eligibility, or if a household does not receive a notice of eligibility, the household should contact the school to have free meal benefits extended to them. Participants in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) may be eligible for free or reduced-price meals, but they will need to turn in an application including household size and total income.

When known to **Franklin Public Schools** households will also be notified of any child's eligibility for free meals if the individual child is considered "Other Source Categorically Eligible", because the child is categorized, as defined by law as:

- Foster
- Homeless,
- Migrant,
- Runaway,
- Enrolled in an eligible Head Start, or
- Enrolled in an eligible pre-kindergarten class.

If any children were not listed on the notice of eligibility, the household should contact the school about their eligibility through the list above, or should submit an income application.

Households notified of their children's eligibility must contact the school if the household chooses to decline the benefits.

For more information, you may call Aaron Lenart at 508-613-2477 or e-mail at lenarta@franklins.net

Community Eligibility Provision

Franklin Public Schools will be participating in the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program. As part of this program, Washington Street Elementary Complex, ECDC on Oat Street, and ECDC on Pond Street will offer healthy meals every school day at NO COST to the students due to the implementation of the Community Eligibility Provision for school year 2026-2027. Students will be able to participate in these meal programs without having to pay a fee or submit a household application.

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To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
Fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
Email: program.intake@usda.gov
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Cactus and Succulent Festival returns for 20th year

Annual event scheduled for Sept. 12 on Norfolk's town common & library

By GRACE ALLEN

The Cactus and Succulent Society of Massachusetts will mark a milestone this month when its 20th annual festival comes to Town Hill in Norfolk.

For enthusiasts and the simply curious alike, the festival provides a glimpse into the esoteric world of cacti and succulents, from familiar favorites to rare and unusual specimens.

This year's event will take place on Saturday, Sept. 12 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Norfolk's town common and in the adjacent public library. Inside the library, hundreds of cacti and succulents will be on display, while outside on the common, 27 vendors and artisans will sell plants, horticultural-themed items, and gifts. Festivalgoers will also find a variety of food offerings, including hot dogs and hamburgers grilled by the Norfolk Lions. The first 50 visitors

will receive a free plant, one of the event's longstanding traditions. Admission is free, and the festival will take place rain or shine.

According to Lau Magnier, the festival's coordinator, in its early days the festival was essentially a club show, giving members a chance to display their prized plants. "You know how people show pictures of their grandchildren? We show pictures of our plants," Magnier quipped.

The festival has moved around over the years as its popularity has grown, progressing from a church basement in Needham to Tower Hill Botanic Garden in Boylston and later an armory in Wakefield. In 2016, it found a home in Norfolk.

The exhibition itself grew after the society did away with formal judging and strict horticultural rules in favor of a simpler philosophy: "Let's just show off the plants we love," Magnier

said. The result, he added, was an exhibition that exploded in size and now features more than 300 plants, many considered living sculptures by devotees.

Magnier attributes much of the festival's staying power to the curiosity cacti inspire. "The word cactus is what draws people," he said, noting that many visitors first discover the event simply by spotting the society's "Cactus Show" signs in surrounding towns. Once there, he said, visitors often make a day of it, taking in the indoor exhibition before heading outside for shopping and food.

Young festivalgoers can get in on the fun as well at a children's booth, where they can choose a cactus or succulent, plant it in a ceramic pot, decorate the pot, and take it home as a souvenir.



The Cactus and Succulent Society of Massachusetts will mark a milestone this month when its 20th annual festival comes to Town Hill in Norfolk. Photos used courtesy of Cactus and Succulent Society of Mass.

The activity debuted last year and was a "huge success" said Magnier.

The festival is the signature event of the Cactus and Succulent Society of Massachusetts, an affiliate of the Cactus and Succulent Society of America. The Massachusetts group, which meets monthly at the Norfolk Public Library, has grown to more than 200 members from across New England. Magnier serves as the society's vice president.

Education is a primary focus of the annual festival, along with raising money to support the society's programs. Plants offered for sale by the club are grown by its members.

For more information about the festival, as well as the Cactus and Succulent Society of Massachusetts, visit <https://cssma.org>. Questions? Send an email to info@cssma.org.

Parking for the festival is available at the Federated Church across the street.



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SPORTS

Can Franklin go back to back?

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Last fall, the Franklin volleyball team captured its very first State Championship under first-year coach Chris Ridolfi. Entering the Division 1 State Tournament, the Panthers had gone 18-2 on the regular season and were the five seed. Franklin would sweep their way into the championship game by defeating Braintree, Lincoln Sudbury, number four Andover and Newton South, who took out the number one team Chelmsford all by a 3-0 score. The Panthers would go on to edge Newton North, the three-time defending champion, 3-2.

Although still early at the time of this writing, to have his full team established, Ridolfi is optimistic about his squad making another splash at the championship game.

“Coming into the season, we don’t have any glaring holes on

this team,” the Coach said. “At this moment, it’s hard to say where we’ll be without putting all the pieces together. The girls will continue to compete, and I will see where they fit; we have all the pieces; I just need to pick the right ones.”

Having already won a State Title, Franklin has put the bulls-eye on their backs as the team to beat this fall. Ridolfi knows that the ceiling is obviously higher but doesn’t want to put pre-season pressure on the team too early.

“My goal is to make it back to the Final 4 and then another bid to the Semi’s,” the Coach said. “Coming in last year the captains (Olivia Alberti and Makayla Kuykendall) told me that they wanted to win a State Championship and then backed it up by doing the work on and off the court.”

Having lost three really big pieces from last year’s historic season, Franklin will be bring-

ing back four key players.

This fall, the Panthers will be lead by captains senior Gianna Laurello, a right side hitter who may be moved to the outside this year, and junior Emerson Delleo, an outside hitter. The duo will be looked upon to lead this team both on and off the court. Ridolfi is hoping that the two captains can set the goal and them go out and guide the team; much like Alberti and Kuykendall did last year.

Last fall, Ridolfi went with two setters allowing then freshman Phoebe O’Connor to ease



With last fall’s state championship, Franklin volleyball is now the team to beat, but their coach feels their prospects are again strong this year.

into the position. By the time the season had come to an end, O’Connor had not only won the position, but was a main cog in the Panthers’ run to the title.

“The team was getting accustomed to a new coach coming in, and Phoebe was trying to learn her role,” the Coach said. “It was her first time navigating a team through a State Championship run, and she proved herself worthy.”

Junior Charlotte Yuelenski is looking to move up as a top middle hitter this year after gaining a ton of experience during the team’s run. This year, the coach is looking for the junior to take the lead and push the younger hitters.

Having lost libero Emma Cunningham from last year’s squad, senior Katelyn Crosby will be looking to chase down that opening. Cunningham held a very important position for Franklin, especially being a serve and pass team. Last year, Crosby was limited in her role with the team after attaining a concussion, and by the time that she returned to the court the team was rolling and they didn’t want to disrupt the momentum, so she wasn’t used all that much.

Participating in the Hockomock league, Franklin is already saddled with a tough schedule with the likes of King Philip,

who went to the Division 2 Semi Finals last ; Oliver Ames, a 20-0 team that won the Division 2 State Championship and Attleboro, always a tough team. Despite battling Hockomock League foes, the Panthers have put together a non-league schedule against some powerhouse teams like Winchester (19-1 in Division 1 last season and one of this year’s top teams), Bishop Feehan (14-6 in Division 1), Barnstable (12-8 in Division 2) and Chelmsford (20-0 and he top seed in Division 1).

“With the schedule we have put together, we will be facing three of the top five teams in the state,” the Panther Coach said. “It will be a measuring stick to how we do throughout the season and will allow us to see who could be in our way of trying to repeat.”

Franklin will see Winchester late in September, giving them a look at where they are weak and what needs to be worked on. They will then use that information to see where they stand with Barnstable before moving on to play Chelmsford.

Franklin will open the season on September 8 against neighboring rival King Philip in a Hockomock League matchup enroute to winning back-to-back State Championships.

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SVDP WALK

continued from page 1

year, in the same period, \$111,000, about 150% more need this year.”

Morris does note that, thanks to a generous donor this year, the SVdP has been able to do more than it ever has before, “which is fantastic. It’s like God is looking over our shoulder, and saying, ‘There’s a storm coming.’ He always seems to



provide for us, so we’re lucky that way.”

With that storm looming, the annual walk, SVdP’s only fundraiser per year, raises needed cash to help neighbors with their immediate needs, even as members of the society work to provide outside resources to permanently lift families out of poverty.

“We try to help educate the neighbors on different ways you can break that cycle, and for some people, if they can just get

over this one hump, then they can become self-sufficient,” says Morris, who believes those with the ability to help others should do so. “We know of resources, state, local and government. It’s oftentimes those connections we provide for them that’s often the helpline they need, and they didn’t even know about them,” says Morris, who nods to the Franklin Interfaith Council, town social workers, and Veterans Services Office for their fantastic support of SVdP clients, which includes, he says, “anybody. It doesn’t matter your denomination, your age, your race, your creed, your color. If you’re in Franklin, and you need some help, we’re going to try to help.”

Over 30 members belong to Franklin’s SVdP conference, one of the biggest in the district.

“That’s a great reflection on the parish and the community always wanting to help,” chimes Morris, adding, “There’s also great support from our pastor and our ministry staff at the church. It’s really the support we get from everyone.”

Sometimes, says Morris, one of the most important things the SVdP volunteers do is listen.

“A big part of what we do is we do home visits,” he notes, “We meet them where they



All generations can come out to support their neighbors, and students can earn volunteer hours.

are and try to understand their circumstances, understand their needs.” A large number, he says, are young women with children, and the gratitude SvDP receives from all the people they help is tremendously rewarding for volunteers.

Morris hopes many people from Franklin will come join the Friends of the Poor Walk around the Common on Sept. 26, the morning of the Harvest Festival, an event that would count toward student volunteer hours.

“It would be great if people

a.m. that day. Those who show up earliest on the morning of the walk will receive t-shirts (while supplies last) and water will be available to all walkers.



If you are unable to walk but would like to help your neighbors, you can support St. Mary’s SVdP team by:

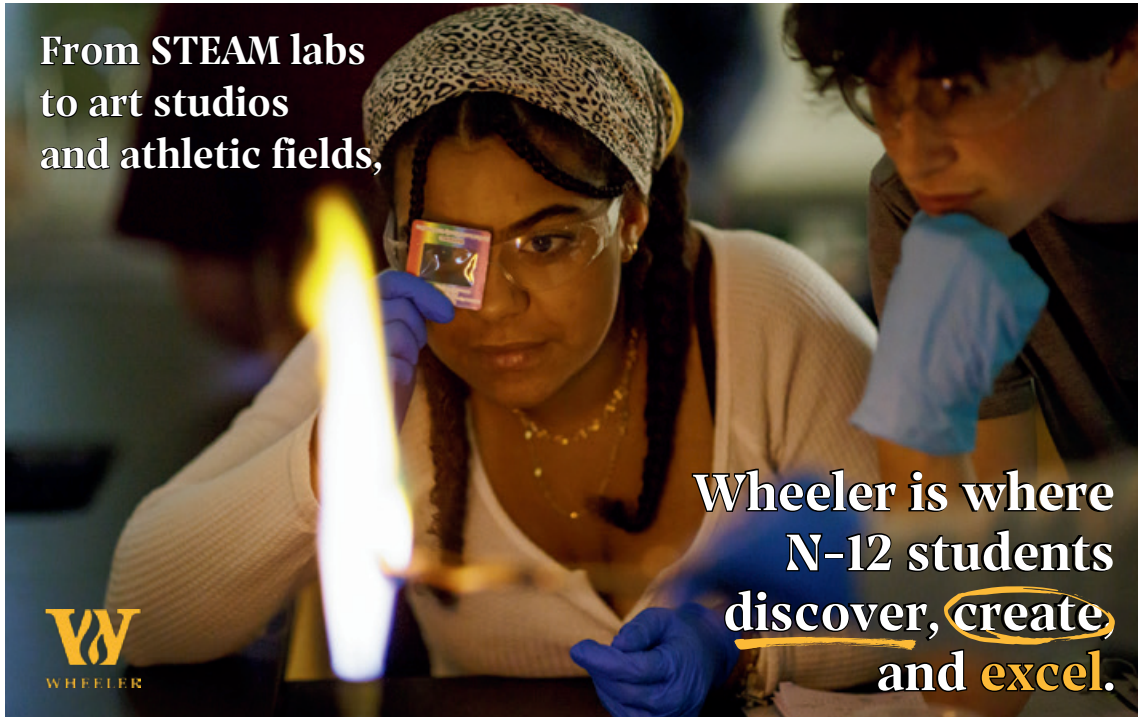
Sending a check to: SVdP, 1 Church Square, Franklin, MA 02038

OR donating Online to the St. Mary’s SVdP team by using the QR code with this article or visiting: https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=T6EQV6EC25NR6.

For questions, please call SVdP at 508-918-2291. All donations stay in Franklin, and all information is kept confidential.



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Sep. 2026 Calendar Sponsored by Notturmo Home Services

September 1

State Primary Election, 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. at the Franklin High School Gymnasium, 218 Oak St., Franklin

Franklin Garden Club meeting, 6-8:30 p.m., Franklin Senior Center, 10 Daniel McCahill St., Franklin, features "Bitters, The Missing Ingredient" by Barbara Aspland-Wolf

September 2

Franklin Art Association meeting, 6:30 p.m., Franklin Senior Center, 10 Daniel McCahill St., Franklin, features artist Rose Wang, all welcome

September 3

Franklin LGBTQ Alliance game night, 6:30 p.m., Franklin TV and Radio Station, 23 Hutchinson St., Franklin

September 4

Franklin Farmers Market, 2-6 p.m., 2-3 p.m. sensory-friendly hour, 3-5 p.m., Franklin Town Common, Jamie Barrett, sponsored by Franklin Cultural Council and Mass Cultural Council

September 7

Allegra Commonwealth Singers guest night, 7-9 p.m., St. Andrews Episcopal Church, 3 Maple St., Framingham, interested adult voices in the treble range (SSAA) are welcome to attend

September 9

Instrument Petting Zoo, 4:30-7:30 p.m., Franklin Public Library, 118 Main St., Franklin, Join the FHS Music boosters for a special instrument petting zoo! Ideal for kids in grades K-7!

September 10

Welcoming ceremony celebrating the newest installations, 5 p.m., Franklin Sculpture Park, Panther Way, Franklin, #FranklinSculpturePark

September 11

Franklin Farmers Market, 2-6 p.m., 2-3 p.m. sensory-friendly hour, 3-6 p.m., Franklin Town Common, Dom DeBaggis, sponsored by Franklin Cultural Council and Mass Cultural Council

September 12

Franklin Senior Center Yard Sale, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., Franklin Senior Center, 10 Daniel McCahill St., Franklin

Bike and Helmet Safety Event, 9:30-11 a.m., Franklin High School parking lot, free helmet giveaway, free bike raffle, bike course to ride through, coloring table, helmet decorating, fire truck, vendor tables, hosted by Ali Rheume, Rep. Jeff Roy, Franklin PD,

info. at alirheume.com/safetyevent

Cactus & Succulent Festival, Norfolk Town Common & Library, hundreds of cacti and succulents will be on display, while outside on the common, 27 vendors and artisans will sell plants, horticultural-themed items, and gifts.

Uxbridge Knights of Columbus Car Show, 9:30 a.m. - 2 p.m., Uxbridge High School, 300 Quaker Highway, Uxbridge

September 13

Mercy and Malevolence - Discovering the Complex Story of St. Theresa's Home of the Little Flower, 1:15 p.m., museum open 1-4 p.m., Franklin Historical Museum, 80 W. Central St., Franklin, free, but donations gratefully accepted

September 14

Allegra Commonwealth Singers guest night, 7-9 p.m., St. Andrews Episcopal Church, 3 Maple St., Framingham, interested adult voices in the treble range (SSAA) are welcome to attend

September 15

Franklin Rotary Pasta Supper, 5 p.m., 1000 Central Park Terrace, Franklin, all residents of Franklin Housing Authority and all seniors welcome to free meal, sign up at Central Park Terrace or Franklin Senior Center

Charles River Chorale open rehearsal for Fall 2026 season, 7:30-9:30 p.m., Church of Christ, 142 Exchange St., Millis. Meet at the church or fill out Sign-Up Form (no obligation) at: <https://forms.gle/six5utARb6pCH45c9>.

September 16

Franklin LGBTQ Alliance Book Club, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Franklin TV and Radio Station, 23 Hutchinson St., Franklin, "The Picture of Dorian Gray," by Oscar Wilde

September 17

Exploring Your Canadian Roots After Bill C-3, 6 p.m., Bellingham Public Library, 100 Blackstone St., Bellingham, Ann Marie Genereux will explain how Americans with French Canadian ancestry may qualify to be a Canadian citizen.

September 18

Franklin Farmers Market, 2-6 p.m., 2-3 p.m. sensory-friendly hour, 3-6 p.m., Franklin Town Common, Critical Mass, sponsored by Franklin Cultural Council and Mass Cultural Council

Franklin Library Book Sale, 1-5 p.m., Franklin Public Library, 118 Main St., Franklin, all books \$1.

Main Street Live, 4 p.m., presented by Bellforge Arts Center, Walpole Town Common, free event includes live music, local vendors, food trucks, cocktails, and community, register at www.bellforge.org.

September 19

Electronics Recycling Event, 9 a.m.- 2 p.m., St. Mary's Church, 201 Main St., Franklin, portion of proceeds benefit church, recycle electronics for \$5-\$35 fee, cash preferred or checks (over \$30), free to recycle reusable bikes, phones, keyboards, tablets, video game media & accessories, wires, chargers, car/truck batteries

Franklin LGBTQ Alliance apple picking, 1-3 p.m., Fairmont Fruit Farm, 887 Lincoln St., Franklin, bring \$ for the apples, market and change for animal feed.

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., fill up a brown paper bag for \$5.

Lucy Kaplansky, Circle of Friends Coffeehouse, 7:30 p.m. (doors open 7 p.m.), First Universalist Society of Franklin meetinghouse, 262 Chestnut St., Franklin, tickets at www.circlefolk.org

September 21

Paint Pour (children and teen program), 1 p.m., Franklin Public Library, 118 Main St., Franklin, get messy and creative with cookie cutter paint pours!

Allegra Commonwealth Singers guest night, 7-9 p.m., St. Andrews Episcopal Church, 3 Maple St., Framingham, interested adult voices in the treble range (SSAA) are welcome to attend

September 22

Franklin Health Department FREE Flu Clinic, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Franklin Senior Center, 10 Daniel McCahill St., all ages, high-dose vaccines available. Schedule appointment at <https://home.color.com/vaccine/register/franklin?site=franklin-flu-clinic>) or call 508-613-1334.

Charles River Chorale open rehearsal for Fall 2026 season, 7:30-9:30 p.m., Church of Christ, 142 Exchange St., Millis. Meet at the church or fill out Sign-Up Form (no obligation) at: <https://forms.gle/six5utARb6pCH45c9>.

September 26

SVdP of St. Mary's Friends of the Poor Walk, 9-11 a.m., Franklin Town Common, join for walk anytime during walk or donate with check to SVdP, 1 Church Sq. Franklin, MA

02038 or online at https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=T6EQV6EC25NR6

Franklin Harvest Festival, 12-5 p.m., downtown Franklin, sponsored by Franklin Downtown Partnership, 130 booths, food, live music, dance, children's activities, rain date 9/27, www.franklindowntownpartnership.org

Harvest Fest (Bellingham), 11 a.m.-3 p.m., Bellingham Town Common, presented by First Baptist Church and Bible Baptist Church, vendors, free pony rides, face painting, a bounce house, an obstacle course, gymnastic and karate exhibitions, concert, and other activities.

7th Annual Pumpkin Patch opens, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. (Sat.), 12-4 p.m. (Sun.), 4- 6 p.m. (M-F, except 10/14, 10-4), St. John's Episcopal Church, 237 Pleasant St., Franklin, through Oct. 31

September 29

Charles River Chorale open rehearsal for Fall 2026 season, 7:30-9:30 p.m., Church of Christ, 142 Exchange St., Millis. Meet at the church or fill out Sign-Up Form (no obligation) at: <https://forms.gle/six5utARb6pCH45c9>.

October 2

Franklin Farmers Market, 2-6 p.m., 2-3 p.m. sensory-friendly hour, Franklin Town Common, 3-6 p.m. Sioo B, sponsored by Franklin Cultural Council and Mass Cultural Council, 4 p.m. Great Pumpkin Contest, Sponsored by Franklin Agricultural Comm.

October 3

The Franklin Rotary Club & New England Chapel 10th Annual Car Show, 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m., New England Chapel, 300 Central St., Franklin, MA 02038. Registration is \$20, free for spectators, sponsors welcomed through 9/11, contact gconvertino@cox.net.

CultureFest, 10 a.m., Bellforge Arts Center, 45 Hospital Road, Medfield, annual community celebration of music, food, dance, and cultural traditions from around the world — presented in partnership with Medfield Together. Register at www.bellforge.org.

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Franklin Historical Museum to Probe History of Forgotten Orphanage Sept. 13



An orphanage classroom in a former mansion dining room. Photo used with permission of the Franklin Historical Museum

Where are they now, the scores of children who once resided in Franklin’s Catholic orphanage? The Franklin Historical Museum wants to know! From the early 1940s to the early 1950s, an orphanage, operated by a Catholic religious order, occupied the Hayward Manor in Franklin, which had just recently been sold by its original owners, the family of a prominent textile executive. St. Theresa’s Home of the Little Flower (also known as the Home of the Holy Child) was never a large institution, with no more than a few dozen children at a time housed there, but it left a deep impression on many of them. Inmates included children from around the region as well as several from Franklin itself whose circumstances made it difficult or impossible for their families to care for them. At the time the “social safety net” was all but non-existent, and some children were rescued from a life on the streets, steal-

ing food to survive, and given food, clothing, and education. But the Bernardine sisters were not always up to the task, and some of those who lived there remember cruelty, a grim, unchanging routine, and a spartan diet. What’s more, the children mostly spoke English while most of the nuns spoke Polish – a formula for conflict and frustration. Anyone who was ever a resident at the home or their family members are especially encouraged to attend. There will be a brief overview of history and newspaper stories about the Orphanage and those with stories to tell will be encouraged to share them. On Sunday, Sept 13, 2026, the museum is open from 1-4 on Sunday and the program starts at 1:15. There is no admission charge but donations are encouraged and appreciated. Contact Alan Earls with questions at alan.r.earls@gmail.com or 508-560-3786.

BankNewport appoints Franklin resident Hacsunda VP, BSA Manager

NEWPORT, R.I. – BankNewport is pleased to announce Franklin resident Christina Hacsunda has joined the Bank as vice president, Bank Secrecy Act (BSA) manager. In this role, Hacsunda is responsible for overseeing compliance with the federally-mandated Bank Secrecy Act, Anti-Money Laundering and

Office of Foreign Assets Control program, as well as related regulatory requirements. Prior to joining BankNewport, Hacsunda served as vice president, Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) officer at The Village Bank in Newton, Massachusetts.

CITATION GIVING NOTICE OF PARTITION TO PARTITION
Commonwealth of Massachusetts Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Norfolk Probate and Family Court 35 Shawmut Road
Canton, MA 02021
(781) 830-1200

Docket No. NO26E0025PP
In the matter of: Petition to Partition 69 Milliken Avenue, Unit 22A, Franklin, MA 02038

To Richard E. Dubois, Jr. of Franklin in said County and to all other interested persons, A petition has been presented to said Court by Diane T. Poisson of Franklin in said County representing that they hold as Joint Tenant a 50% undivided part or share of certain land lying in Franklin in the County of Norfolk, and briefly described as follows 69 Milliken Avenue, Unit 22A, Franklin, MA 02038. Unit No 22A of the Milliken Hills Condominium (the Condominium) located in Franklin, Norfolk County, Massachusetts, created by Master Deed dated 6/18/90, recorded with Norfolk County Registry of Deeds in Book 5746, Page 537, as amended. The unit is conveyed is as shown on a plan recorded with the first unit deed, which plan is a copy of a portion of the plans recorded with said Master Deed and to which is affixed a verified statement in the form require by MGL, Chapter 183A, section 9. The unit is conveyed together with an undivided 4.45% interest in the common areas and facilities and the same percentage interest in the organization of unit owners known as the Milliken Condominium Trust. The Condominium is conveyed subject to, and with the benefit of, the Obligations, Restrictions, rights and liabilities contained in MGL, Chapter 183A, as amended, the Master Deed and the By-Laws of the Milliken Hills Condominium Trust and setting forth that they desire that all of said land may be sold at private sale or public auction for not less than two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000.00) and praying that partition may be made of all the land aforesaid according to law, and to that end, that a commissioner be appointed to make such partition and be ordered to make sale and conveyance of all, or any part of said land which the court finds cannot be advantageously divided at private sale and be ordered to distribute and pay over the net proceeds thereof in such manner to make the partition just and equal.

If you desire to object thereto you or your attorney should file a written appearance and answer in said Court at Canton before ten o'clock in the forenoon on the October 7, 2026 the return day of this citation.

WITNESS, Hon. Lee Peterson, First Justice of this Court.
Date: August 25, 2026
Colleen M Brierley, Register of Probate

MERCURY RECOVERY PROGRAM

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FBRTC announces new benches installed on the SNETT



The Franklin & Bellingham Rail Trail Committee (FBRTC) is pleased to announce that 4 new benches have been installed along the Southern New England Trunkline Trail (SNETT), enhancing comfort and accessibility for trail users.

The benches were paid for with a combination of a Mass Trails grant that was awarded in November, and fundraising proceeds raised at events like our recent Rail Trail 5k.

The process began during the summer of 2024 when the committee sent out a survey to the community asking what improvements they would like. The committee then surveyed

the trail, and determined 4 locations that would benefit from new benches. The team then worked with MA DCR to get a quote for acquiring and installing the benches and used that information to apply for a Mass Trails grant. The grant was submitted in February 2025, and grant winners were originally supposed to be notified in June 2025. Due to unexpected circumstances, the grants were not awarded until November 2025. With a compressed timeline, FBRTC worked with DCR to coordinate the preparation of the sites for the benches, and then assemble and install the benches.

The four new benches were installed along the 2.3-mile stretch of the SNETT between Spring Street in Franklin and Center Street in Bellingham.

FBRTC is a volunteer-led advocacy organization dedicated to the development and maintenance of the Southern New England Trunkline Trail. Last year, the committee played a key role in advocating for the use of Community Preservation Act funds in Franklin to purchase disused freight rail land—ex-

tending the SNETT by 1.75 miles into downtown Franklin. The group’s ongoing priorities include improving the Franklin–Bellingham section of the trail and advancing connectivity toward Blackstone.

FBRTC extends its sincere thanks to Kevin Holtenbeck and Raymond Longvall from Massachusetts DCR, as well as to state and local officials, sponsors, and donors who supported this effort. Learn more about getting involved with FBRTC by emailing fbrtcommittee@gmail.com.

Photos used courtesy of Franklin Bellingham Rail Trail Committee



Rotary Club of Franklin MA 34th Annual Pasta Supper September 15

The Rotary Club of Franklin MA 34th Annual Pasta Supper will take place on September 15, 2026, at 5 p.m., at 1000 Central Park Terrace, Franklin.

All Senior Citizens and residents of the Franklin Housing Authority are welcome to this free annual event.

Sign-up at:
Central Park Terrace, 1000 Central Park Terrace, Franklin, Mass.
Franklin Senior Center, 10 Daniel McCahill Street, Franklin, Mass.
Find out more about Rotary at <https://www.rotary.org/en/about-rotary>.

Franklin Senior Center yard sale supports seniors

Saturday, September 12, 9 a.m.- 2 p.m.
10 Daniel McCahill St., Franklin
The Franklin Senior Center Yard Sale. Saturday, September 12, 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. Outdoor and indoor. If bad weather is forecast it will all be

held indoors.
Gift shop will be open.
Offering Seasonal goods, home decor, kitchenware, jewelry, handbags, children’s items, vintage treasures and women’s clothing.
Something for everyone.!

Johnson Brunetti expands Franklin presence with move to larger office

Johnson Brunetti, an independent retirement and investment specialist firm founded in 2003, has moved its Franklin office to a larger location at 1

Fisher Street in Franklin. The new 2,754-square-foot office replaces Johnson Brunetti’s previous location in the nearby Franklin Village Plaza.

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Saturday: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. CLOSED Sunday

1776 Financial Services awards 2026 Scott Dittrich Memorial Scholarships



Pictured from left to right: Audrey Lutfy, Pieter van Vredenburg
Pictured from left to right: Dean Lawless, Mark Dittrich

Franklin, Mass. – August 2026 – 1776 Financial Services awarded the Scott Dittrich Memorial Scholarships to Dean Lawless of Franklin High School and Audrey Lutfy of King Philip Regional High School. The scholarship is given in memory of 1776 Financial Services co-founder Scott Dittrich who passed away in March 2023. Throughout his lifetime, Scott demonstrated the extraordinary ability to regularly engage others and influence change.

These annual scholarships are awarded to one Franklin High School senior and one King Philip Regional High School senior who will pursue a business-related major at a 4-year college or university. The scholarship is a progressive one that will be given out over the four years of study.

1776 Financial would like to wish Dean and Audrey the best of luck as they attend Thomas College and the University of Miami respectively.

Save the spooky date!

Franklin Police Halloween party is back on!
Saturday, October 24, 2-5 p.m.
(Rain date, same time, Sunday, October 25)



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Amy N. Azza, experienced attorney of 24 years, is accepting new clients for their estate planning needs for wills, trusts, powers of attorney and health care proxies.

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WHY YOU NEED A WILL

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WHY YOU NEED A HEALTH CARE PROXY

A health care proxy is a document that names someone you trust as your proxy, or agent, to express your wishes and make health care decisions for you if you are unable to speak for yourself.

WHY YOU NEED A DURABLE POWER OF ATTORNEY

A Durable Power of Attorney provides extensive power to the individual who is assigned that role. Absent an appointed Agent in a Durable Power of Attorney, it would be necessary for a family member or loved one to petition the court to become the guardian over the incapacitated person.



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Franklin Town Hall: Community Highlights & Updates



Explore Career Opportunities with the Town of Franklin

The Town of Franklin is currently seeking qualified candidates for several employment opportunities across municipal government. Interested applicants can learn more by visiting the Town's employment webpage at www.franklinma.gov/228/job-opportunities

Stay Informed: Franklin First Newsletter & Town Updates

Residents are encouraged to stay up to date with Town news, highlights, and important announcements by reading the monthly Franklin First Newsletter. Read the latest edition: <https://www.franklinma.gov/1139/Franklin-First-Newsletter>

Residents can also follow the Town of Franklin on social media for timely updates, reminders, and community news. Subscribe for Town news and announcements: <https://tinyurl.com/Franklin-NewsandAnnouncements>

Franklin Garden Club kicks off season with program on bitters

Franklin, Mass. – A program on “Bitters, The Missing Ingredient” by Barbara Aspland-Wolf will highlight the opening meeting of the Franklin Garden Club's 2026-2027 season. The meeting will take place on Tuesday, September 8, 2026, at the Franklin Senior Center, 10 Daniel McCahill Street, from 6– 8:30 p.m. An informal social get-together will take place from 6 – 6:30 p.m. followed by the program, open to the public.

As part of the program, Aspland-Wolf will explain how bitters are important to the health

and workings of the liver and gallbladder. Bitters provide digestive health, help with nutrient absorption and are an important part of meals and drinks. Most modern diets do not include this fabulous flavor. Participants will discover a new love for the bitter flavor and how to make it a part of daily health habits. For those who wish, there will be an opportunity to make bitters for a cost of \$15 to cover supplies.

Aspland-Wolf is a flower essence practitioner, Reiki Master/Teacher, herbalist, and plant communication educator. Work-

ing with plants is a melding of her science background, herbal studies, and energy work. She is the owner/operator of Garden Gate Herbs and a community herbal teacher. She has taught at Sage Mountain, Herbstalk, the Northeast Herbal Association retreats, Plants Speak, and local programs. In addition to leading nature walks, she has written for several publications. Barbara is a member of United Plant Savers, Native Plant Trust, International Association of Reiki Practitioners, and the Flower Essence Society.

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Gov. Healey Signs Freedom to Read Law at Franklin Public Library

Franklin, MA – The Town of Franklin welcomed Gov. Maura Healey to the Franklin Public Library on Monday, August 10, 2026, as she signed Bill S.2726 (<https://malegislature.gov/Bills/194/S2726>), the Freedom to Read law, establishing protections for the freedom to read and creating a fair, transparent process for reviewing library materials.

Town Administrator Jamie Hellen opened the event with remarks. Town Councilors, Town staff members and elected officials, library staff, Library Director Felicia Oti, Franklin Public Schools Superintendent Lucas Giguere, School Committee members, State Rep. Jeff Roy, State Sen. Becca Rausch and other local and state legislators were in attendance for the

historic signing.

The Franklin Public Library — the nation's first public lending library — provided a fitting setting for the signing of the legislation.

The new law establishes statewide standards for how public and school libraries select and review library materials. It ensures families and community members have a voice when



Franklin Town Council member Ted Cormier-Leger, Franklin Library Director Felicia Oti, and Gov. Maura Healey.

they have concerns about library materials, while establishing an open local process for reviewing those concerns. The law also protects librarians and educators who make library selections in good faith and reinforces local decision-making.

The Town of Franklin thanks Gov. Healey and the Healey-Driscoll administration for recognizing Franklin and its historic library and for joining the community for this important occasion.

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September 2026 – Veterans' Services Newsletter Notes

Veterans' Services Office: (508) 613-1315

September 2 – Monthly Coffee Social – 10 a.m. at the Senior Center. All Veterans are welcome!

September 15 – Tune It Out guitar lessons for Veterans - **OPEN HOUSE** - 5:30 p.m. – Meet the instructors and other Vets who are learning to play guitar. Weekly classes meet on Tuesdays from 5:30 – 6:30 p.m. at the Senior Center. No fee, and guitar experience is not needed. We have guitars!

September 17 – Veterans' Council Meeting – 7 p.m. at the Senior Center. All Franklin residents interested in Veterans' activities are welcome to join us!

September 18 – Veterans Memorial Walkway - Deadline for engraved brick orders for the November installation. Brick order forms are available in the Town Hall and Senior Center lobbies and online at: <https://www.franklinma.gov/377/Veterans-Memorial-Walkway>

September 18 – U.S. Air Force and Air National Guard's Birthday - Before the creation of the Air Force, the military's flying operations

were handled by the U.S. Army on land and the Navy by sea. The history of the U.S. Air Force is an important part of the history of air power in the United States. The official birth date of the Air National Guard as a reserve component of the Air Force is also September 18, 1947.

September 18 – National POW/MIA Recognition Day – A day to remember and honor those Americans who were prisoners of war and those who served and never returned home.

September 24 – Warrior Within Yoga for Veterans and First Responders - **OPEN HOUSE** - 4 p.m. at the Senior Center. No fee and yoga experience is not needed. Meet our instructor and see if this yoga class designed for Veterans is right for you!

September 27 – Gold Star Mothers and Families Day - A day to honor the families of fallen Service Members.

Please visit our webpage at: <https://www.franklinma.gov/335/Veterans-Services>

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Santa Foundation kicks off holiday giving season with gala October 2

The Santa Foundation is excited to invite the community to its Annual Gala on Friday, October 2, 2026, from 6-10 p.m. at the Franklin Elks Lodge. The evening promises a great buffet dinner, live entertainment, exciting raffles, and an opportunity to make a meaningful difference for local children and families facing financial hardship during the holiday season.

“The Gala has become one of my favorite nights of the year,” said Karla Boudreau, Gala Chair and Santa Foundation Director. “As I look out into the crowd, I reflect on the many unique ways our community contributes to this special evening and our mission. It’s an opportunity to recognize and celebrate their incredible generosity while raising the funds needed to ensure hundreds of local children and their families

wake up to a magical Christmas morning full of hope and happiness.”

This year’s Gala will feature several exciting fundraising opportunities, including an exclusive Golden Ticket Raffle. For just \$50, supporters can purchase one of only 100 Golden Tickets for the opportunity to win one of two incredible prize packages. Golden Tickets are available through the Santa Foundation website and may be purchased whether or not you attend the Gala. With only 100 tickets available, participants have an exceptional chance to win.

Featuring two great prize packages - two winners will be selected, with the first winner choosing between the prizes before the second winner receives the remaining package. Golden Ticket prizes include a 3 night

get-away in Stowe, VT, with accommodations for four guests and gift cards for local attractions. Our 2nd Golden Ticket Prize features a backyard fall oasis, including a great smokeless fire stove and fun accessories.

Guests will also have the opportunity to bid on extraordinary sports experiences in the Premier Silent Auction, participate in a Live Auction featuring unique items and experiences, browse raffle prizes generously donated by local businesses, and even take home one of the evening’s beautiful floral centerpieces.

At the Franklin Harvest Festival just days before the gala, The Santa Foundation will launch its popular Holiday Calendar Fundraiser, a community favorite, featuring 31 days of prizes generously donated by

local businesses. Winning numbers will be drawn throughout November, culminating with a final, \$1,000 cash prize.

The Santa Foundation serves families across 34 communities in Massachusetts and Rhode Island providing personalized holiday gifts, essential items, and assistance to families experiencing financial hardship. Last holiday season, the Foundation provided holiday support to more than 860 families, impacting over 3,500 individuals. The all-volunteer Foundation relies on local businesses, community partners, and individual donors to continue its impact.

Community members are encouraged to reserve their seats



The all-volunteer Santa Foundation serves families across 34 MA and RI communities, last year providing holiday support to over 860 families, or 3,500 individuals. Their annual fundraising gala is October 2. Photo used courtesy of The Santa Foundation.

to the gala, available now, early. Sponsorship opportunities, raffle prize donations, and volunteers are also welcome.

For more information or to purchase Gala tickets, visit www.sfjoy.org or follow the Santa Foundation on Facebook.

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Town Council approves Town Administrator contract

FRANKLIN, Mass. — On Wednesday, Aug. 12, the Franklin Town Council voted 5-4 to approve a new employment contract for Town Administrator Jamie Hellen. Hellen’s contract is extended through June 30, 2030.

As required by law, the contract negotiations were conducted in executive session before the Council voted on the resolution to approve in open session.

“I believe Jamie has demonstrated strong leadership and a deep commitment to the Town of Franklin,” said Town Council Chair Robert Dellorco. “He has helped keep the Town focused on the important work in front of us and has developed an exceptional staff culture. I’m pleased to support his contract and look forward to what we can continue to accomplish together over the next four years.”

Town Council Vice Chair Gene Grella, who voted against the contract, said his vote was not a reflection of his assessment of Hellen’s work as Town Administrator or the work of the Town staff.

“We all have respect for Jamie and the work he has done over the past 11 years,” said Vice Chair Grella. “The four Councilors who voted against the contract had concerns with the process, timing and approach taken with the contract extension and modification.”

Town Council Clerk Ted Cormier-Leger, a veteran of the Council, also added his support for extending his contract.

“Having served on the Town Council and worked with Jamie over the past five years, I’ve had the opportunity to see firsthand his leadership and commitment to Franklin,” said Clerk Cormier-Leger. “He has built strong relationships with our departments, employees, community stakeholders and the Council. I believe that extending his contract is in the best interest of our organization.”

In 2026, Hellen is completing his 11th year as a Franklin employee. He served as the Town’s first ever Deputy Town Administrator between Jan. 2016 to May of 2019 when he officially took the reins from previous Town Administrator, Jeff Nutting.

“I’m grateful and honored for the opportunity to continue serving the Town of Franklin and for the confidence placed in me by the Town Council,” said Town Administrator Hellen. “I’m proud of the work our staff and volunteers accomplish every day. I look forward to continuing to work within the community to build on the progress we’ve made and focus on the priorities ahead.”

Hellen’s contact extension and modification highlighted only a handful of changes:

The contract term was extended through June 30, 2030; He received no additional compensation, nor did Hellen request any increase in pay, as the salary is within the market. The compensation has already been approved in the FY27 budget;

The vehicle allowance for work travel was increased to \$5,000 annually from \$3,500 annually, which is to reflect the inflation related cost increases of travel since 2019;

Removal of required language for the Deputy Town Administrator; and

Notification of resignation was increased from 30 days to 90 days.

For more information, visit the Town Administrator webpage on the Town of Franklin’s website. Read the approved Town Administrator’s contract for additional details.

2026 A-Wreath-of-Franklin scheduled for December 12



Shown here with Franklin Cultural Council Chair John Ristaino (right) at the 2026 Strawberry Stroll, Hiran Jani (left), the Franklin resident who came up with the theme for the 2026 A-Wreath-of-Franklin, “The Magic We Make.” Photo by Judith Dorato O’Gara

Please save the date for Saturday, December 12, 2026, 11 a.m.- 4 p.m. for the 2026 A-Wreath-of-Franklin program (<https://www.franklinma.gov/1430/2026-A-Wreath-of-Franklin>) This year’s theme, “The Magic We Make,” was suggested by Franklin resident Hiran Jani through the Franklin Cultural Council’s social media engagement.

Building on the success and momentum of previous years, A-Wreath-of-Franklin continues to bring together local businesses, artists, cultural organizations, community partners, and residents to celebrate creativity/ community and holiday cheer for all while driving activity throughout downtown Franklin.

What’s coming up at Franklin Senior Center

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

- Following are a few highlights of the month:
- All about Trusts, Sept. 15, 1 p.m., presentation with Q&A
 - Cancer Support Group, Sept. 16, 12:30 p.m.
 - Memory Café, Sept. 16, 1 p.m.
 - Crochet Class, Sept. 17 1 p.m., with Amanda no experience necessary
 - 50+ Job Seekers: interviewing, Sept. 21, 1:30 p.m., with career counselor George Armstrong
 - Flu Shot Clinic, Sept. 22, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., call Alisha at 508-613-1334 to sign up.
 - Rockland Trust Fraud Seminar, Sept. 22, 1 p.m.
 - Hip Hop Square Dance, Sept. 23, 1 p.m., supported by Franklin Cultural Council
 - Art Night Gallery, Sept. 24, 5-7 p.m., check out artwork by our seniors
 - Eat around the World, Sept. 25, 11a.m., Hungary
 - Pelvic Health, Sept. 29, 1 p.m., presented by Accelerated Performance Rehabilitation
 - Wind Chime Craft, Sept. 3, 1 p.m., \$5 for materials
 - Titanic & the Golden Age of Steamships, with Bob & Geri Tasker, Sept. 9, 1:30 p.m.
 - Monthly Party, Sept. 11, 11 a.m., Hollywood theme with “Marilyn Monroe!”
 - Yard Sale, Sept. 12, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., supports center’s programs and services
 - GATRA Info. Session, Sept. 14, 10 a.m., with Kerri Victorio on upcoming changes

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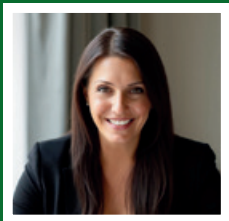


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