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Franklin

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A Society of Moms

By Natalee Webb-Rubino

In December of 2017, Jaya Pandey created the Desi Moms Network. It is a unique forum to help other South Asian mothers whose children have physical, mental health, Autism, or other developmental disabilities. However, support groups in existence at the time did not focus on the mother but on the raising of a child with a disability. Her network changed that. Her mission statement for the Desi Moms Network is, "Every mom needs a friend."



The Pandey Family (L-R). Anand, Dad Ashish, Jaya, and oldest son Ajey.

"Desi" is a term used to describe local or indigenous peoples and fosters a shared identity that highlights the cultural traditions unique to South Asia.

"As mothers, we often navigate unique emotional, cultural, and social challenges" Jaya explained. Her idea was to bring these moms together in a woman-based network a "village of women and their families." The network is about moms helping moms through shared experiences, resources, hope, and friendship. To let families know that they are not alone.

Moms meet other moms through their children in various school activities or activities outside of school. Once the child moves on to middle school, this social network with other Moms declines. Jaya's "village" seeks to bring a safe space where mothers of children with disabilities

DESI MOMS
continued on page 3

Ben Franklin wins 4-H Eastern States Exposition Showmanship Champion title

Ellie Dalton and Ben represented Massachusetts 4-H and competed at the Eastern States Exposition's 51st Dog Show last month. They competed against Juniors from all across New England and earned the title of Showmanship Champion!
Submitted photo



State Champions!



Congratulations to the Tri-County Regional Technical Vocational High School cheer team for its achievement as Game Day Small Division State Champions last month!

Source: Franklin Matters shared from Tricountyregional on Instagram, https://www.instagram.com/p/Dfzg72el84t/?srtk=MjInZ3EzY3psemM1.

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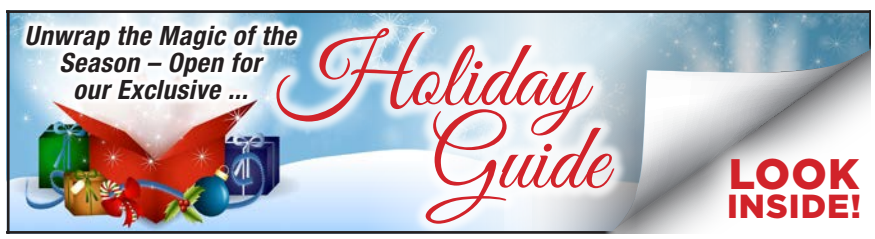

Police station decisions still pending

The following is excerpted from a 2-part article appearing in "The Franklin Observer," www.franklinobserver.town.news, November 9-10, 2026 and is used with permission.

By Alan Earls

The question of where to build a new police station has become intertwined with several other major decisions facing Franklin, including what to do with surplus school buildings, how to accommodate other municipal departments and how much additional debt taxpayers can reasonably support.

The town's Police Station Building Committee has recommended the former Gerald M. Parmenter Elementary School property as the preferred location for a replacement headquarters. But the recommendation is only one step in a process that could ultimately commit the town to tens of millions of dollars in construction expenditures.

The approximately $40 million estimate, first appearing in municipal planning documents in early 2024, is *not* a final price. Nor does it necessarily represent the amount Franklin would need to borrow after completing design, engineering, site preparation and other preliminary work.

As of the latest municipal discussions, the Town Council had not made a final decision on the location or financing of the proposed station.

The Parmenter property, near King Street and Wachusett Street, was among several locations examined by the Police Station Building Committee and its consultants.

Other candidates included the former Davis Thayer School property near downtown, which remains empty and unused, a residential parcel on Grove Street and the existing police station property on Panther Way.

"The Franklin Observer" examined these and other possibilities in February 2025, noting that the town has relatively little undeveloped land suitable for a major public building. Using town-owned land could eliminate property acquisition costs, although site preparation and demolition expenses could still be substantial.

"The Observer" also identified several other municipal properties that might warrant consideration, including land on Beaver Street and the possibility of combining public safety functions at an existing fire station. Those possibilities were discussed as alternatives, not necessarily as locations formally endorsed by the building committee.

On January 6, 2026, the committee voted unanimously to recommend Parmenter as the preferred site. At the same meeting, members voted 6-1 to recommend a $62,500 code review of the existing Parmenter building. Such an assessment could help determine whether the structure could be retained or adapted, rather than demolished.

The vote, according to a "Franklin Matters" report, did not authorize construction of a new station.

A broader debate about town property

The police station proposal is part of a larger discussion about Franklin's publicly owned real estate.

On September 2, 2026, the Town Council began what Town Administrator Jamie Hellen described as a multi-month discussion of the future of the Parmenter and Davis Thayer properties, along with town-owned land at 275 Beaver Street.

The council was also expected to consider the permanent location of the Recreation Department and whether certain properties should be sold, leased or retained for future municipal needs.

According to Hellen's August 28 memorandum, the September presentation was intended to begin public discussion rather than produce immediate decisions. The distinction matters, because selecting Parmenter for a police station could affect the town's ability to use that property for recreation, education or other municipal purposes. Conversely, choosing another site could free Parmenter for reuse or disposal while creating additional costs elsewhere.

The town's September agenda reportedly included reports from its Geographic Information Systems director, public facilities director and planning staff, as well as draft requests for proposals involving other municipal properties …

One important question for Franklin is whether a standalone police station would be more economical over its useful life than a combined public safety complex.

Combining functions can sometimes reduce duplication of meeting rooms, training spaces, mechanical systems and other facilities. However, shared buildings also require more complicated planning and may cost more initially.

No conclusion about the financial merits of such an approach in Franklin can be reached without a comparable engineering and cost analysis.

For taxpayers, the most consequential issue may be how Franklin intends to finance the project. Municipal construction projects are frequently financed through long-term borrowing, allowing costs to be spread over the useful life of a building. But borrowing introduces interest expenses, and the eventual amount paid can be considerably higher than the original construction cost, particularly with borrowing costs that have trended upward in recent years … and actual costs would depend on interest rates, borrowing terms, project expenditures and any available funding from other sources.

Franklin officials would also need to determine whether the debt could be supported within the existing municipal budget or, more likely, what additional tax revenue would be required.

A debt exclusion under Massachusetts Proposition 2½ is one possible financing mechanism for a major capital project, but it would require voter approval. Other financing approaches may be available depending on the town's fiscal capacity.

The town's decision would therefore involve more than choosing a location. It would require balancing the police department's long-term needs against other municipal priorities, including schools, roads, water and sewer infrastructure, and existing debt obligations.

Renovation versus replacement

Another question that has not been absolutely answered is whether the existing Panther Way station could be substantially renovated or expanded at a lower cost.

The current location has significant limitations, particularly wetlands and site constraints that restrict conventional expansion. Still, the relative costs of renovation, vertical expansion and new construction could be worth comparing before a final commitment is made.

The International Association of Chiefs of Police, in its Police Facilities Planning Guidelines, recommends that communities begin by thoroughly assessing operational requirements, future growth, site conditions and alternatives. The guidelines recognize that police facilities represent unusually long-term investments and that most communities undertake such projects infrequently.

For Franklin, that suggests that the immediate objective should not simply be to construct a larger building, but to determine which solution provides adequate capacity, security, accessibility and operational efficiency at an acceptable long-term cost.

What happens next?

The Police Station Building Committee's Parmenter recommendation gives the Town Council a starting point, but several important questions remain. Among them are whether the former school building should be retained or demolished, what the final size and configuration of the new station should be, whether other municipal departments might share the site, and what would become of the existing Panther Way property.

A detailed cost estimate will also be needed to determine whether the original $40 million planning figure remains realistic.

For residents, the coming decisions will help determine not only the future of Franklin's police headquarters, but also the disposition of valuable town-owned property and the community's financial commitments for decades to come.



Franklin LGBTQ Alliance December events

Bowling at Pinz: Thurs., December 3, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Pinz 110 S. Main St., Milford

Join the Franklin LGBTQ Alliance as we go bowling at Pinz. $10. RSVP at franklinlgbtqalliance@gmail.com.

Brunch at Mak's: Sat., December 5, 10 a.m.-12 p.m., Mak's Roast Beef, 451 W. Central St., Franklin. Join us as we eat great food with great friends.

Book Club: Wed., December 16, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Franklin TV & Radio, 23 Hutchinson St., Franklin, "Days of Awe," by Achy Obejas.

DESI MOMS

continued from page 1

have support, understanding, and inclusiveness. The theme of this network is to address the needs of the mother and not just the child.

Jaya discovered that the existing support network available to the moms of these children centered solely on the child. Mothers often left these groups feeling depressed. Her belief was that if they could connect as mothers with like interests rather than support groups that focus their discussions on the challenges of raising the child with a disability, moms would feel joy and not sadness. The Desi Moms Network reversed that child-centric focus to address the needs of the moms.

"Everyone needs a friend not the identity of being a mom with a child who has a disability, but on being a woman," said Jaya. The network empowers women to find, comradery, friendship, and support, while giving them the strength to stand by their children, but to also have the courage to say, "I need my time."

Jaya, who has lived in Franklin since 2001, began by networking with other mothers through the Indian community, Indian newspapers, social media, and a blog. Mostly, word-of-mouth grew the network. She also worked with Special Education directors. Over the years, the Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS), which supports adults with intellectual development disabilities and Autism, started sending her referrals for those seeking this type of support. At the very first luncheon, 30 women came together to participate.

When moms participate in the network meet ups, they are seated next to a person they do not know. By chatting with those on either side and in front of them, the participant finds three new friendships, and the village begins. As the women cultivate these new friends, families are brought into the network.

The network of moms meets 1-2 times a month. Events are held for both the moms and their families. For example, 59 families participated in a Great Wolf Lodge outing, 20 moms at a paint night, 150 families at a Canobie Lake Park outing, and four busloads of families on a Boston Duck Boat tour.



A paint and sip night at Pinot's Palette in Lexington. 20 moms from the Desi Moms Network attended.

December marks their 9th anniversary. Now, 362 moms belong to the Desi Moms Network in Massachusetts alone. The network continues to grow globally, and, from the success of the moms' group, a dads' group emerged.

Jaya wants mothers of children with disabilities to know, "You are not alone. Come meet other moms and join our village."

You can contact the network at DesiMomsNetwork@gmail.com. To learn more about this unique and supportive group visit their social media pages; a blog at http://momlovesanand.blogspot.com, their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/groups/2905103776402318 or their Instagram portal at https://www.instagram.com/desimomsnetwork

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Tessa Tough

By Judith Dorato O'Gara

On Friday, November 6, 5-year-old Tessa Garwood and her three brothers received a first-class escort by a long train of Franklin Police & Franklin Fire vehicles to a special celebration at Fairmount Fruit Farm, the end of Tessa's two-year treatment for B-ALL, B-cell acute lymphoblastic leukemia. Tessa, decked out in bejeweled princess peach and pink, climbed, along with her brothers, aboard Franklin Fire engine 2 that drove right up to their Franklin home. The succession of bright emergency vehicles illuminated the dark, wet autumn afternoon.

"She turned 3 years old, and she went to the doctor for her annual checkup," explained Tessa's dad, James Garwood, recalling the diagnosis two years ago. "They pricked her finger and one of her hemoglobin counts was low. She had no symptoms," he said.

After the ride to the farm, emergency responders posed for photos with the family.

When asked her feelings about being done with treatment, Tessa's mom, Laura, struggled to hold back a wave of emotion.

"The beginning was a lot," she said, "She got diagnosed, and it was completely shocking at the doctor." She added the family of six, including Tessa's brothers, Brody, 12, Joe, 10 and Landon, 7, had no other family in town, and so was grateful to be able to rely " basically on this community" which allowed her boys to remain in travel sports and other activities while Tessa underwent a lot of treatment.

"The worst was in the hospital for 32 days. The chemo was daily, and she was very sick from the chemo. Then, she came home, and we were at the Jimmy Fund about once a week," said Laura. Later, another therapy would have Tessa wearing a bag, which had to be routinely changed.

"There's so many layers to it all," said Laura, of her family's journey. Although her 5-year-old will receive testing every month for six months, which will taper off to less frequently, she said, with relief, "She's cancer free."



Tessa and her friend, Joanna, employed the photo backdrop at a greenhouse beautifully decorated for her party.



5-year-old Tessa Garwood stands with her family and what seemed like just about every Franklin first responder outside Fairmount Fruit Farm in celebration of her end to leukemia treatment last month.

Franklin coat drive continues through Dec. 7



Donate gently used or new coats to help your Franklin area neighbors!

Collection bins will be at the following locations:

- Franklin Fire Department
- Franklin Police Department
- Franklin United Methodist Church
- New England Chapel
- Hockomock YMCA

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Advertising Director
Jen Schofield
508-570-6544
jenschofield@localtownpages.com

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Wendy Watkins

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2027 Senior Tax Work-Off Program - applications open

Applications for the Town of Franklin's 2027 Senior Tax Work-Off Program opened Monday, November 30, 2026.

Eligible Franklin residents ages 60 and older who own a home in town (or are the primary beneficiary of a property held in trust) can work up to 100 hours annually in Town departments in exchange for a reduction in their real estate taxes.

Applications are available at the Franklin Senior Center or online. A new application is required each year.



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Santa Foundation grateful for community that answers the call

By Judith Dorato O'Gara

Help your neighbors have a happy holiday! The Santa Foundation, which serves families across 34 communities in Massachusetts and Rhode Island providing personalized holiday gifts, essential items, and assistance to families experiencing financial hardship, had already gotten requests for help from 650 finally struggling families by mid-November, expecting close to 1,000 this year. You can help!

The organization has placed giving trees in many locations in and around Franklin thanks to generous community partners, adding more since last month. Each tag hung on the tree represents a holiday wish. By taking a tag and purchasing that gift for the Santa Foundation, you can brighten this Christmas for a local family!

"We already have 650 families on our list this year," said Joe Formosa, in mid-November, of the Santa Foundation, who, with his wife Pam and longtime Santa Foundation leaders Dick and Cindy Timmons lead the organization with Carla Beaudreau and Scott Musser. He added, "As much as the need can seem overwhelming, we continue to be surprised by the generosity of our community. What keeps us motivated is other people keep showing up, and that is great!"

At Santa Foundation events this year, he notes:

150 people joined in for Family Bowling Day at North Bowl in March

25 people from Liberty Mutual's Torchbearer program volunteered in May

90 people joined our first Bingo Night (thanks Raydio) in June

170 people joined the Santa Foundation Holiday Party to celebrate and kick off the work season

Over 500 people participated in November for the calendar fund raising program

More than 100 volunteers come together from September through December to call recipients, pack bags and provide Joy and Hope to an expected 1,000 families this season

More than 100 families, companies and school groups have come together to sponsor more than 200 families in our community.

Formosa says, "I would like to thank everyone for all the time, donations and support for our Mission."

There's still time to take a tag!

Santa Foundation Giving Trees can be found at the following locations. In addition to this listing, Franklin and Medway Police Department holiday collections also support the Santa Foundation.

Find Santa Foundation Giving Trees at the following local locations:



Advance Auto Parts	45 Pulaski Blvd., Bellingham
Bank of America	288 Hartford Ave., Bellingham
Berry Insurance	31 Hayward St., Suite J, Franklin
Franklin Tile	168 Grove St., Franklin
Grove Street Auto	79 Grove St., Franklin
James Breakfast & More	850 Franklin St., Wrentham
King Street Café	390 King St., Franklin
Mak's Roast Beef & Breakfast	451 W. Central St., Franklin
Middlesex Bank	1000 Franklin Village Dr., Franklin
Norfolk Credit Union	18 Union St., Ste. 104, Norfolk
Postal Center Franklin	279 E Central St., Franklin
Postal Center Milford	9 Medway Rd., Ste. C, Milford
Postal Center Millis	14 Milliston Rd., Millis
Red Bird Brands	23 West Bacon St., Ste. 9, Plainville
Remax Real Estate	309 West Central St., Franklin
Birchwood Bakery & Kitchen	7 Central St., Franklin
Dean Bank	21 Main St., Franklin
Big Apple Farms	155 Arnold St., Wrentham
Wrentham Village Premium Outlets Welcome Center	1 Premium Outlet Blvd., Wrentham
Shoveltown Auto Service	95 Eastman St., South Easton
Patriot Auto Service	2000 Main St., Walpole
Emma's Quilt Cupboard	319 E. Central St., Franklin
Learning Express	80 Franklin Village Dr., Franklin
Wrentham Fiske Library (Local Girl Scout Troup)	110 Randall Rd., Wrentham
Red Bird Brands	23 W. Bacon St., Plainville
Franklin Kitchens	22 E. Central St., Franklin
RP Marzilla Landscaping	21 Trotter Dr., Medway
The Beef Barn	160 Pulaski Blvd., Bellingham
Byrne Financial Freedom	11 East St., Franklin

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Franklin Town Hall: Community Highlights & Updates

Franklin Town Council Decision on Single vs Split Tax Rate - December 2

After holding three tax rate workshops throughout October and November, the Council will hold its tax classification hearing to vote on whether to maintain the single or adopt a split tax rate for Franklin residents and businesses for FY27.

Franklin Restaurant Week Coming this December!

Franklin Restaurant Week is coming **Saturday, December 12 through Sunday, December 20**, and there's still time for Franklin restaurants to participate!

Restaurant Week is an opportunity to showcase Franklin's vibrant dining scene and encourage residents and visitors to explore local restaurants.

The Town of Franklin and the Franklin Downtown Partnership are collaborating to bring this celebration to the community, with participating restaurants and their offerings promoted and highlighted on a dedicated program website created specifically for this winter's Restaurant Week. Restaurants can sign up by completing this form: https://tinyurl.com/DecemberRestaurantWeek

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

Santa and a Live Nativity at St. John's Christmas Fair

Start your holiday season with a visit to Santa, homemade sweets and a live Nativity scene at the Annual Christmas Fair at St. John's Episcopal Church on Saturday, December 5th, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 237 Pleasant Street, Franklin. Admission is free, and everyone is welcome.

Bring the children to meet Santa and pose for photos from 10 a.m. to noon. Then step outside to the front lawn, where Mary, Joseph and Baby Jesus, joined by real sheep, goats and a donkey, will bring the Christmas story to life. The live Nativity runs from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Inside, get a head start on your holiday gift list—or find a little something for yourself. Browse themed gift baskets featuring sports, spa, health and wellness, pet items, food, wine, coffees and teas. Shop for fresh wreaths and greens, discover unique finds in Grandma's Attic, and purchase gift cards from favorite restaurants and stores.

Try your luck in the popular raffle or bid on silent auction items and experiences.

Follow your sweet tooth to the Cookie Walk for homemade cookies, fudge and other baked goods to share or savor. Snacks and drinks will also be available for purchase throughout the fair.

For more information, call 508-528-2387, email admin@stjohnsfranklinma.org, visit www.stjohnsfranklinma.org or follow on Facebook.

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Taste the flavor of Franklin with Franklin Restaurant Week, December 12 – 20



By Judith Dorato O'Gara

Franklin's second Restaurant Week will offer a winter run Saturday, Dec. 12 through Sunday, Dec. 20, 2026. Participating restaurants get to showcase their unique fare. It's a great opportunity to try a new eatery or visit your go-to favorite.

The event kicks off on December 12 alongside A Wreath of Franklin (11 a.m. – 4 p.m.) in downtown Franklin, featuring holiday festivities, local shopping, and a pop-up arts market at THE BLACK BOX (www.theblackboxonline.com)at 15 W. Central St.

Jamie Hellen notes Franklin Town Councilor Steve Malloy suggested this event at a public meeting during a goals-setting session last winter after the election.

"We added it to the goals, staff marketed a campaign last May and June, and it was very successful. Thus, we are doing a second one this year and then will do two every year - one in spring and one at the holidays," he says.

Participating restaurants will provide a special offering, ideally a pre-fixe menu for dine in restaurants or a deal for those that are more take-out based.

"Franklin's Restaurant Week is the start of hopefully a new tradition very much like what other local Restaurant Weeks offer. People love the pre-fixe menus that share the essence of what that restaurant has to offer," says Jenna Reilly, Executive Director of the Franklin Downtown Partnership, adding, "When people look at everyone's offerings, they can see our diverse list of dining options here in town."

Restaurants can share their dining experience with a wider audience, and Franklin-area consumers can support our local businesses, with a fitting start on Small Business Saturday and multiple dining options throughout the offered dates.

Restaurant week is a coordinated effort bringing many facets of the community together.

"What makes this so special is that this is a collaboration with the Town of Franklin and the Franklin Downtown Partnership working together to create an event that makes dining with our small businesses accessible and fun," Reilly said.

"We've also added a fun element that when you attend the A Wreath of Franklin event on the coordinated opening day, December 12, you will receive a Festive Passport. As you dine around Franklin, the participating restaurants will put a sticker in your passport. Turn the passport in at the end of Restaurant Week and your passport will be put in a raffle for a swag basket from the Franklin 250 Committee," said Cory Shea, Franklin's Director of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy.

At press time, participating restaurants included: ichigo ichie, Haven Hot Chicken, Maduro House, Central Pizza, The Tavern on Central, The Rome Restaurant, La Cantina Winery, The Curry House, Raillery Public House, Teddy Gallagher's Irish Pub, and The Shed, with more being added. For an updated list of participating restaurants, visit

https://tinyurl.com/FranklinRestWeek26

Does your restaurant want to participate? Check out the website at: https://www.franklinma.gov/1310/Franklin-Restaurant-Week.

For more information on the Franklin Downtown Partnership, visit www.franklindowntownpartnership.org or follow them on Instagram and Facebook for updates.

For more information on the 2026 A-Wreath-Of-Franklin visit its link on the town website: https://ma-franklin.civicplus.com/1430/2026-A-Wreath-of-Franklin or follow @franklinculture on social media.

For more information on the Franklin 250th Committee, visit its link on the town website, https://www.franklinma.gov/1209/250th-Anniversary-Celebration-Committee or follow @franklinma250 on social media.

3rd annual A-Wreath-of-Franklin December 12, 2026

The Franklin community is abuzz with excitement over planned events for the 3rd Annual A-Wreath-of-Franklin, December 12, 2026, from 11 a.m. – 4 p.m., in the Franklin Cultural District, Downtown Franklin. This year's theme is "The Magic We Make."

A-Wreath-of-Franklin is a community-centered creative placemaking initiative that brings holiday spirit to downtown Franklin through locally created wreath installations, pop-up arts markets, live performances, and partnerships with local artists, artisans, and businesses. The program celebrates local creativity, supports small businesses, activates public and commercial spaces, and fosters connection through the arts.

Local community groups will display wreaths they've displayed at various locations. For more information on the wreaths (sign up by Dec. 1) visit: https://franklinartsculture.my.canva.site/2026-aw-reath-of-franklin/the-wreaths

Live music is being planned for the event, and at press time, activities included:

- Community coat giveaway in the morning at Franklin UMC (9 a.m.-12 p.m.)
- Pancake breakfast at Franklin Public Library (10:30 a.m.)
- Pop-Up Arts Market at THE BLACK BOX, Franklin Historical Museum and the Franklin Kitchen Center (12 – 4 p.m.) Kids can make their own public art snow flake in the Apres Ski Black Box lounge!
- A Festive Passport activity for fun stops & restaurants around Franklin (pick up at Franklin Historical Museum from 11:15 a.m.)

For an updated list, visit https://tinyurl.com/AWreathAFranklin3activities.

At press time, brick and mortar storefronts, which were still signing up, included:

- Fiori & Fern, 138 E. Central St.
- Greco Design Shop, popped up at Applause, 36 Main St.
- I Have Coins & Collectibles, 15 Main St.
- Pete's Nerd Emporium, 10 Main St.
- PIP, 5 Main St.
- Pisini Shoes, 22 Main St.
- Little Shop of Olive Oils, 9 Main St.
- The Downtown Market House, 82 Emmons St.
- Thru the Looking Glass, 11 E. Central St.

You can find a full list of participating businesses, community wide programming, pop up vendors and more through the website link on the 2026 A Wreath of Franklin page on the town of Franklin website, www.franklinma.gov. Also, follow @franklinculture on social media.

BEN 4 Franklin presents talk on building strong neighborhood & downtown

By Judith Dorato O'Gara

On November 12, 2026, Building Equitable Neighborhoods for Franklin, (www.ben4franklin.org) held a public discussion, "Complete Neighborhoods & Vibrant Downtowns in Franklin," in the Franklin TV studio. Hosts included former Franklin Town Counselor Cobi Frongillo and Franklin Matters' Steve Sherlock, both members of BEN 4 Franklin.

The event featured Jonathan Berk, founder of re:MAIN, and Ashley Eaton, Senior Planner at Massachusetts Housing Partnership (MHP).

Eaton opened the talk with a discussion of the concept of a "complete neighborhood."

"When we're thinking about complete neighborhoods, we're thinking about places where you live and can meet all or most of the things you would need in your daily life without access to a car … These are often referred to as 15- or 20-minute neighborhoods," Eaton explained.

Complete neighborhoods, she continued, often are rich in jobs, transit and opportunity and so are highly valued and therefore, expensive. Challenges to building them include making them accessible for all ages and socioeconomic backgrounds as well as providing physical infrastructure such as sidewalks and low-traffic streets.

Such neighborhoods are not new, she added, pointing to the 1900s.

"Back then, places were built that way because they needed to be, and these places remain some of the economic engines," Eaton continued, but "a lot you cannot build today due to our rules and regulations. We value them, but we cannot replicate them," a reason MHP has created its Complete Neighborhood Technical Assistance Program (https://tinyurl.com/CompleteNeighborhoodTechAssist)

Eaton suggested co-locating housing and business not only creates a built-in market but also creates opportunity to preserve other parcels for other uses such as open space.

Walkable communities also enhance social well-being, and downtown mixed-use buildings generate more tax revenue and less social service outlay than wider-spread suburban neighborhoods that feature strip malls or box stores.



Last month's BEN for Franklin talk at Franklin TV featured a discussion on building "Complete Neighborhoods."

Berk, of re:MAIN, explained how the average household size has shrunk to fewer people per home, so that housing the same population now takes 33% more homes to house the same population than in 1950. Noting goals of many towns to reduce traffic congestion, he explained that only 20% of motor vehicle trips are for commuting, and most trips from home are three miles or less. In addition, he said, small neighborhood businesses not only add a service, but they are a social benefit of a familiar face.

Berk encouraged planners to "embrace smart growth" and to consider housing other than single family homes or large-scale multi-dwelling buildings often discussed, suggesting answers could be found in "triple deckers, duplexes, ADU's, town homes, and modest mixed use" construction. He also busted a myth about multifamily units overcrowding schools and encouraged planners to consider the impact their choices now will have on future generations.

That echoed sentiments Frongillo expressed to Local Town Pages in May, when the organization held its annual Jane Jacobs walking tour.

"When Franklin was thriving," said Frongillo, "It was built on middle housing, small lot homes, town homes, 2-, 3- and 4-family homes and mixed-use properties with combined commercial and residential opportunities. It became popular in the late 1900s to dramatically downzone, to limit the types of homes that could be built in the community in response to what was at the time a very fast-moving community that was struggling to keep up its service offerings with the growth. Downzoning was a way to discourage new homes being built in the community … Most of the homes and neighborhoods we know and love, built prior to today's zoning code, could not be built today."

You can watch last month's BEN4Franklin presentation on Franklin, MA All-Access TV's YouTube channel.





Your Money, Your Independence

Financial gifts for kids that outlast the wrapping paper



Glenn Brown, CFP

Every December, millions of adults spend hours hunting for the hottest toys, gadgets, and gift cards, only to watch most lose their appeal by day's end. If you are a parent, grandparent, aunt, or uncle looking for a more meaningful gift, consider shifting from items that depreciate in a closet to assets that compound.

Time is the real gift. Financial gifting is not about taking the fun out of the holidays. It is about pairing small, tangible moments today with a head start on financial independence tomorrow. Because young people have decades ahead of them, even modest December contributions can quietly grow into life-changing flexibility.

Here are three practical ways to invest in the next generation this holiday season:

1. Fund a Trump Account—Eyeing an Age-18 Roth Conversion. Launched this year, federally backed Trump Accounts let relatives contribute up to $5,000 a year per child under 18, with no income restrictions, provided combined gifts stay within that $5,000 cap. Funds grow tax-deferred in a low-cost S&P 500 index fund until age 18, when traditional IRA rules take over.

That milestone unlocks a two-stage Roth conversion strategy due to the IRS pro-rata rule. You cannot convert only tax-free contributions first; each conversion is taxed proportionally based on the account's mix of after-tax family gifts (tax-free basis) and taxable investment growth:

- **Convert small slices in school:** Starting at 18, a full-time student can convert small amounts annually, sheltered by their standard deduction, so the taxable share stays under the $2,700 "kiddie tax" threshold and avoids their parents' higher rate.
- **Convert the rest once self-supporting:** Once graduated and paying over half their own support, they can convert the remaining balance in their own low entry-level bracket with their full single standard deduction, locking in decades of tax-free growth.

2. Contribute to a 529 Education Plan. For education-focused goals, a 529 plan remains tough to beat. Contributions grow tax-free, and withdrawals stay tax-free for qualified expenses—including college tuition, trade schools, registered apprenticeships, and K–12 tuition.

Many state plans offer direct gifting links that make it simple for relatives to contribute online:

- **Ask parents for the gift link** rather than guessing which state plan they use.
- **Check for state tax perks,** as several states offer an income tax deduction or credit for contributions.
- **Include a physical token,** like a favorite book or printed certificate, so younger kids still have something to unwrap.

3. Match Earned Income in a Custodial Roth IRA. If a teenager earned income this year from a summer job,babysitting, or part-time work, they qualify for a custodial Roth IRA. You can help ensure they contribute up to their total annual earnings, subject to IRS limits.

A simple "family match" turns hard work into an immediate lesson in ownership:

- **Offer to match every dollar** they save from their paycheck into the Roth IRA.
- **Let investments compound tax-free** for decades, giving them a retirement head start before graduation.
- **Keep contributions flexible,** since original Roth contributions can later be withdrawn penalty-free if truly needed (such as for a first home down payment).

Start a New Holiday Tradition. You do not need to write a massive check to make a lasting difference. Whether you add $50 to a child's Trump Account or match a teen's part-time earnings, you are giving something no store can stock: time in the market and confidence with money. Even better, you are introducing parents to tax-advantaged tools that can build lasting wealth for their children.

Take ten minutes this week to pick one young person in your life, choose the account that fits their stage, and give a gift that grows right alongside them.

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.

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Coming up at Franklin Senior Center

The Franklin Senior Center is located at 10 Daniel McCahill St., Franklin. Reach them at 508-520-4945. Here are some highlights this month:

Winter Wonderland, Thu., 12/10, 4:30-7 p.m. (Free! FOR ALL AGES!)

Come for an evening of holiday cheer! See the Senior Center decked out for the holidays, including live entertainment, FFD touch-a-truck, refreshments, hot cocoa, caricature artist, face painting, kid's crafts, local artist gallery, photobooth, raffle baskets, and Santa Claus!

The Senior Center gift shop & Holiday Market will be open.

Senior Center Van will be available for rides, please call to schedule.

Winter Wonderland After Party, Fri., 12/11, 10:30 a.m.

Brunch tickets are $5, please sign-up with front desk. If you'd like to join, but not eat brunch, the After Party is free to attend! Holiday Trivia starts at 11 a.m.

Wear your holiday pajamas!

Southeastern MA Community Concert Band. Mon., 12/21, 7 p.m.

Join us for an evening of live holiday music. Free and open to the entire community!

Cancer Support Group, Wed., 12/16, 12:30 p.m.

Christmas Party! Our Cancer Support Group is open to anyone that has (or had) experience with a long-term illness. Come join us to celebrate the first year of our support group!

BCBS Medicare, Fri., 12/4, 10 a.m.

Presented by Blue Cross Blue Shield. We'll go over Medicare Supplement Plans and Part D drug plans, as well as the 2027 options.

Low Vision Support Holiday Party, Fri., 12/4, 1 p.m.

Support Group leader Kerry MacDonald and Jillian from the Senior Center invite the Low Vision Group for cookies, hot cocoa, holiday music, and fun games.

CST Info Session, Tue., 12/8, 1 p.m.

Do you or a loved one live with early-stage dementia or Alzheimer's disease? Join us to learn about Cognitive Stimulation Therapy (CST), an evidence-based program coming back to the Franklin Senior Center in January.

Outsmart the Scammers, Tue., 12/15, 1 p.m.

Presented by Greg Safford of Edward Jones Financial.



Last year's Winter Wonderland included an Elvis impersonator! This year, the free, all ages event will take place on Dec. 10. Photo used courtesy of Franklin Senior Center.

Memory Café, Wed., 12/16, 1 p.m.

For those experiencing memory loss, as well as their caregivers. Enjoy an hour of music, conversation, refreshments, and meaningful engagement. Sponsored by a MCC grant.

Active Mind Program, Thu., 12/17, 10 a.m.

Join us for an interactive program that incorporates evidence-based principles of cognitive stimulation, socialization, mental challenges, and fun to keep our minds working.

50+ Job Seekers, Mon., 12/21, 1:30 p.m.

Job coach George Armstrong will discuss salary negotiation, benefits, and verbal vs. written offers.

Ambulance Billing, Tue., 12/29, 1 p.m.

MA Senior Medicare Patrol will over deductibles, copays, ambulance vs chair car transport, paperwork you may be asked to sign, and how to resolve billing discrepancies.

Franklin salutes veterans, 2026

By Natalee Webb



Commanders, Dick Hynes of the American Legion Post 75, and Gerry Bradie of the VFW Post 3102 surprised Veterans Service Officer Shannon Nisbett with flowers and kind words for her dedication to Franklin's Veterans. Behind the Commanders is the WWII plaque that was returned to the High School.



The Elks Luncheon's Keynote Speaker, Marine Corps Veteran AnDré Summers. An impressive round of applause was given for his poignant speech on "Making Gratitude a Verb."



Lucas Giguere, Superintendent of Schools and a Marine Corps Veteran, stands alongside Franklin's last known WWII Veteran, Art Ziemer at the Elks Luncheon.



Franklin's "Doughboy" statue flanked by the Veterans Memorial Walkway

Today's Veterans are modest in word, courageous in deed, grateful to serve, and happy to return home to their lives and families. Those of us observing Veterans Day know that we love our Veterans, we appreciate them, and are grateful for their service. We are their friends, their family, their co-workers, and their neighbors. On Veterans Day, Franklin honors its Veterans with gratitude and respect in a heart-stirring way.

On Veterans Day, Franklin honors those who selflessly gave up their own freedom to protect our freedoms. When a civilian enters the Armed Forces, they become a "GI" or Government Issue and freely give up their freedom to become our protectors, 24/7. Their weekends and holidays then belong to the government who can call upon them at any given moment.

World War I hostilities ceased on November 11, 1918. At 5:15 a.m. That morning, Germany, facing imminent invasion, signed an Armistice Agreement in the Compiegne Forest within the Rethondes Clearing in France. The agreement went into effect at 11 a.m. on 11th day of the 11th month. For the signing of this Armistice Treaty, the whole world observed a moment of silence for the ending of WWI. Thus began "Armistice Day," or Remembrance Day, as it is called in Great Britain. In 1954, after having been through both World War II and the Korean Wars, Congress changed the name from Armistice Day to Veterans Day so that Veterans from all wars would be recognized.

Franklin honors their World War I Veterans with a monument on the Town Common called the "Doughboy" statue. The name Doughboy came about during the Mexican-American War of 1846. Soldiers covered with white adobe dust were called "adobes" or "dobies" later called "Doughboys." Erected in 1929, the names of the 423 soldiers who returned home and the 13 soldiers who gave the ultimate sacrifice, are inscribed on the monument. Born in 1901, America's last World War I Doughboy, Frank Buckles died in West Virginia at the age of 110.

WWI pitted the "Central Powers" of the German Empire, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire (now known as Turkey) against the "Allies" of France, the British Empire (at the time included Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Newfoundland, and India) along with Russia, Italy, Japan, and America. The assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the throne of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, thrust the world into war.

All of Franklin's Veterans are honored with a plethora of ceremonies. The Veterans Day luncheon, hosted by the Elks Lodge 2136, has served Franklin Veterans for more than 3 decades. Franklin's American Legion Post 75 provides the Honor Guard at the annual luncheon. Post 75 also conducts ceremonies for the Veteran residents at several assisted living Homes including Cornerstone at Milford Assisted Living, Benchmark Senior Living, Cedarwood Gardens Nursing Home, and the Enclave of Franklin. Ceremonies were also conducted at Dean College.

A little-known show of respect for Franklin's Veterans is the Funeral Flags. On the morning of a Veteran's funeral, flags are placed along Main Street to honor and pay tribute to the passing of a Franklin Veteran. This tradition is humbly carried out by members of the American Legion Post 75 who are notified of a Veteran's death by Franklin's funeral homes, Oteri and Son and Ginley.



The American Legion Post 75 held a Veterans Day Ceremony at Benchmark Senior Living. Ceremonies were also held at the Senior residences of Cornerstone at Milford Assisted Living, Cedarwood Gardens Nursing Home, and the Enclave of Franklin.







Washington Street School raises over $22K for American Heart Association

Franklin, MA — Washington Street School recently received a Heart of Gold Certificate from the American Heart Association (AHA) after raising $22,162 during the AHA Kids Heart Challenge.

On Thursday, Sept. 24, a representative from the AHA delivered the Heart of Gold Certificate to the Washington Street School for raising the sixth-highest donation amount of all participating schools in Massachusetts.

The AHA Kids Heart Challenge is a school-based program that teaches elementary school students heart-healthy habits and lifesaving skills, while collecting donations for children with heart conditions.

The top 10 participating schools in the state are awarded certificates. Schools are recognized based on their engagement and impact in the Kids Heart Challenge, including the total funds raised, number of students involved and activities incorporated into physical education and health classes.

All Washington Street School students participated in the challenge from Feb. 9-23, in which they practiced heart-healthy forms of exercise and learned about the anatomy and functions of the heart, CPR and components of fitness, and 230 families donated.



"I look forward to watching our students continue to practice the heart-healthy habits they learned during the program," said K-2 Principal Stefani Wasik. "Caring for your own health and the health of others is an important lesson our students will carry with them as they move through life. We are proud to teach these values early on at Washington Street School and are excited to see our students grow as they work these habits into their daily lives."

Students also participated in various challenges available on the Kids Heart Challenge Website. The school tracked donations and awarded prizes to students throughout the challenge period.

"We are so proud of our students for taking part in this program, and we hope they are proud of themselves, as well," said 3-5 Principal Evan Chelman. "We want to thank our physical education and health teachers, who incorporated the Kids Heart Challenge into the curriculum in a fun and engaging way for our students. Through their hard work, our students had the opportunity to learn skills that have lifelong benefits, participate in challenges and raise money for a great cause during the Kids Heart Challenge"

Norfolk County Senior Volunteer Program hosts 7th annual holiday drive for veterans

Dedham, MA – The Norfolk County Senior Volunteer Program is hosting its 7th Annual Holiday Drive to Benefit Veterans, running through New Year's Eve, December 31, 2026. Donations go to veterans receiving care at local Veterans Administration hospitals in West Roxbury, Jamaica Plain and Brockton.

VA hospitals can accept only new, unused items. Requested items include:

- Personal care and hygiene: toothbrushes and toothpaste, denture cleaning tablets and adhesive, soap, body wash and shampoo (3-in-1 preferred), bath towels, deodorant (alcohol-free), shaving cream, handheld mirrors and nail clippers

- Apparel and comfort: sweatsuits (all genders, larger sizes), undergarments, hats and gloves, reading glasses, personal clip-on fans, backscratchers and adult puzzle books/games

Donation bins are located at the following locations:

DEDHAM: Norfolk County Administrative Offices, 614 High Street, 2nd Floor; Dedham Council on Aging, 450 Washington St.; American Legion, 155 Eastern Ave; Dedham Public Library, 43 Church Street

CANTON: Town Hall, 801 Washington St.

FRANKLIN: Senior Center, 10 Daniel McCahill St.

MEDFIELD: Council on Aging, 1 Icehouse Rd.

NORFOLK: Senior Center, 28 Medway Branch.

NORWOOD: Senior Center, 275 Prospect St.

WALPOLE: Senior Center, 60 South St.

SHARON: Council on Aging, 219 Massapoag Ave.

For more information on the Norfolk County Senior Volunteer Program, visit norfolkcountyrsvp.galaxydigital.com or call 781-329-5728. Follow on facebook.com/NorfolkCountyRSVP and linkedin.com/showcase/norfolkcountyrsvp.

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FDP Holiday happenings & gift guide online through Dec. 31

Includes shopping, dining & entertainment

The HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS & GIFT GUIDE is now live and online. The Holiday Guide spotlights all things Franklin – downtown and beyond - for holiday shopping, dining and fun through December 31.

Presented by the Franklin Downtown Partnership, the online shopping guide brings together seasonal sales, special promotions, gift ideas and holiday activities from participating FDP business members. It's an easy way to discover what Franklin has to offer, whether you're shopping for gifts or taking a break from the holiday bustle.

Browse the online guide at the FDP's website: at franklindowntownpartnership.org.

Check out shops around town for unique finds; treat someone to a favorite restaurant; give the gift of an experience or pampering for special occasions. You'll also find entertainment and family activities to help make your season memorable.

It's the perfect preview for shopping, dining, services, and entertainment. Keep your holiday shopping close to home—and support the businesses that make Franklin special and thrive.

Thank you to the sponsors of the Partnership's Holiday Gift Guide:

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 & Fabrication, Inc.; Hockomock YMCA; Notturno Home Services; Rockland Trust Bank; The Enclave of Franklin

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FRANKLIN DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP
25th ANNIVERSARY 2001 – 2026

Follow the Downtown Partnership on Instagram and Facebook for updates on the guide and other events.

The Franklin Downtown Partnership is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization made up of more than 350 business owners, residents, and community leaders working to revitalize downtown Franklin. Residents can join the Downtown Partnership for $25. For more information go to www.franklindowntownpartnership.org.

December 2026 Veterans' Services Notes

December 2 – Veterans' Monthly Coffee Social – 10 a.m., Franklin Senior Center. All Veterans are invited to join us for some holiday cheer! Socials are held the first Wednesday of the month.

December 7 - National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day – is an annual observance to honor the 2,335 U.S. service members killed in the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. An additional 68 civilians also lost their lives, bringing the total American death toll to 2,403.

December 13 – U.S. National Guard's 390th Birthday - The National Guard is the oldest military organization in America.

December 19 – National Wreaths Across America Day – Wreath-laying ceremonies at Veterans' cemeteries, memorials and historic sites will be held at 4,000+ locations nationwide. To sponsor a wreath, volunteer or partner with this group on National Wreaths Across America Day, and every day, go to: https://www.wreathsacrossamerica.org/

December 20 – U.S. Space Force's 7th Birthday - As the newest branch of the U.S. Armed Forces, it was created in 2019 to focus on the national security imperative of space and is organized under the Department of the Air Force. Members of the Space Force are officially called Guardians.

There will be no Veterans' Council meeting in December.

The Tune It Out guitar lessons program for Veterans meets on Tuesdays at 5:30 p.m. at the Senior Center. There is no charge for lessons and no guitar experience is required. We have guitars! Call our office to register. **Tune It Out will not meet on 12/15/26, 12/22/26 and 12/29/26.**

Warrior Within Yoga for Veterans and First Responders meets on Thursdays at 4:00 p.m. at the Senior Center. There is no charge for classes. Call our office to register. **There will be no yoga class on 12/10/2026, 12/24/26 and 12/31/26.**

The next engraved brick installation on the Veterans Memorial Walkway is scheduled to coincide with Memorial Day. Brick orders are now being accepted for the May 2027 installation.

Thank you to all who have supported the Walkway project!

Please visit our web page at: www.franklinma.gov/335/Veterans-Services

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FRANKLIN, MASS.
Veterans and Seniors may pick out coats on December 11 from 1-3pm,
for more details contact the Franklin Senior Center or the Veterans Affairs officer.
Questions? Contact Kim Mu-Chow (neccares@nechapel.org) or the office@franklinumc.org.

The b.LUXE *beauty beat*

The Real Housewives of MetroWest: The Holiday Reunion



Winter Has Entered the Chat

Never watched *The Real Housewives*? Here's all you need to know: glamorous women, big personalities, and even bigger drama. Every season ends with a reunion. The cast gathers on a couch, host Andy Cohen pulls out the cue cards, and someone finally has to answer for her behavior.

For our final Beauty Beat of 2026, we're hosting a reunion of our own. This season's cast? The four services that keep b.LUXE running: Hair, Makeup, Skincare, and Wigs. They've had a good season. Summer was easy. Fall was polite. But just as things got cozy, a new personality swept into town with a full wardrobe, strong opinions about the thermostat, and a few friends nobody invited.

Fair warning: she's stunning, she's glamorous, and she's not nearly as sweet as she looks.

Ladies, things are about to get frosty. Winter has entered the chat.

Our host for the evening? Heather Cohen (no relation to Andy, but she does love a dramatic reveal). She owns b.LUXE Hair and Makeup in Medway and is the only woman brave enough to moderate these personalities. The lighting is flattering. The cue cards are ready, and Winter just tossed another log on the fire.

Let's Meet the Cast

Every Real Housewife gets a tagline, the signature one-liner she delivers in the opening credits. Ours are no exception.

Hair: "I've got body, bounce, and zero patience for hat hair."

Makeup: "Natural is not a shortcut. It's a look."

Skincare: "I'm not dramatic. I'm dehydrated."

Wigs: "I know what I want, and I usually get it."

Winter: "I'm not here to make friends. I'm here to make it snow."

Hair Brings Receipts

Heather starts gently. "Winter, how do you think your first season went?"

"Honestly? Iconic." Winter adjusts her faux fur. "A party every weekend. Everyone's invited."

"Lovely," Hair says. "Then why did you send a windstorm to the last one?"

"Here we go," Winter sighs.

Hair holds up her phone. "Exhibit A. Fresh b.LUXE party blowout. Glossy. Full. Gorgeous." She swipes. "Exhibit B. Same blowout, after wind, flurries, and an outdoor firepit."

Winter squints. "It looks exactly the same."

"Exactly."

In her confessional, Hair doesn't hold back. "She handed me a hat. A hat! I'm not covering this gorgeous hair. Play fair, Winter."

Heather smiles. "That's what a good blowout does. Tell your stylist what's on the calendar. Soft waves for the office party. A polished low bun for holiday dinner with the in-laws. Volume that lasts past midnight on New Year's Eve."

Winter tosses her scarf. "Cute. I've got a nor'easter booked for New Year's Eve."

"Bring it," Hair says.

Makeup Sets the Record Straight

Makeup raises one perfectly groomed brow. "Can I say something? Because I've been very patient."

"Ha! Since when?" Hair snorts.

"Every December, everyone wants the 'natural look.' And everyone thinks it takes five minutes."

"Doesn't it?" Hair says. "Mascara, lipstick, out the door."

Makeup turns slowly. "Natural and quick are not the same thing. We can't all throw it up in a messy bun and call it a look."

"Ice cold," Winter purrs.

Makeup ignores her. "This flawless face took an appointment, honey. Not a red light."

Winter fluffs her faux fur. "Please. I do mine at red lights."

"We can tell," Makeup whispers. "Book the appointment. Let a professional work her magic."

Skincare Denies the Drama

Heather turns to the end of the couch. "Skincare, you've been awfully quiet over there."

Skincare slips off her cardigan. "I've been waiting my turn. I'd like to talk about the friends Winter brought to the party."

Winter blinks. "What friends?"

"Cold Air. Indoor Heat. And Snow!"

"Oh, Snow's a diva," Wigs scoffs.

"You're being dramatic," Winter says.

"I'm not dramatic. I'm dehydrated."

Gasps from the couch.

"Bless your heart," Winter coos. "I didn't know. Have you tried dermaplaning?"

"Already on the books for next week," Skincare says with a wink.

"Will you be bringing your phone?" Heather asks.

"Absolutely not."

Wigs Ate and Is Ready for Dinner

Wigs checks her watch for the third time. "Darlings, I love this, but I have a 7 o'clock."

Winter gasps. "You're leaving? We haven't even gotten to my side of the story."

Wigs reaches for her purse. "I've heard your side, Winter. It's called the 10-day forecast. Besides, Heather found me this look. It's perfect. It frames my face. It's comfortable, and it feels like me. Let it snow, diva! This girl has a reservation."

Wigs air-kisses Heather and sweeps out the door.

Winter stares after her. "How rude."

The Ladies Say Cheese

Closing her cue cards, Heather marvels, "Somehow, we're all still speaking."

"Barely," says Skincare.

"Cast photo!" Winter announces. Hair fluffs. Makeup fixes the lighting. Skincare checks her glow.

The door swings open. "Did someone say photo?" Wigs strikes a pose. "You didn't think I'd miss our holiday group shot? We're the whole package, ladies!"

Winter plants herself front and center.

Nobody is surprised.

Before the Credits Roll

After all that drama, the ladies find common ground. Turns out nothing unites a cast like a good deal. Our Buy 3, Get 1 Free Sale on all retail is the talk of MetroWest. Stock up on your beauty essentials, or treat someone on your list. It's RHOMW approved. The sale runs through December 23, our last open day of 2026.

That's a wrap on our first reunion. From our couch to yours, happy holidays, and see you next season!

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LIVING HEALTHY

A year of breakthroughs in eye care: Looking back at 2026

By Roger M. Kaldawy, M.D.
Milford Franklin Eye Center

As we say farewell to 2026, it is worth reflecting on the remarkable advances in ophthalmology that are changing how we diagnose and treat eye disease. From innovative treatments for macular degeneration to advanced laser procedures for glaucoma and next-generation cataract lens implants, modern eye care is moving toward more precise, less invasive, and increasingly personalized treatments.

At Milford-Franklin Eye Center (MFEC), we believe our patients deserve access to these advances close to home. Throughout the year, we have continued to invest in leading-edge technology, advanced surgical capabilities, and experienced physicians to bring the highest level of comprehensive eye care to the communities we proudly serve.

A New Approach to Macular Degeneration

One of the most exciting developments in retinal care is photobiomodulation (PBM), an innovative, non-invasive treatment for patients with intermediate dry age-related macular degeneration (AMD). Traditionally, patients diagnosed with this condition were advised to take nutritional supplements, monitor their vision, and return for periodic examinations. While these measures remain important, photobiomodulation introduces an additional treatment option.

Using specific wavelengths of low-level light, this technology targets the mitochondria, the energy-producing structures within retinal cells, with the goal of supporting cellular function and retinal health. Clinical studies have demonstrated improvements in visual acuity in appropriately selected patients, making PBM an important development in the management of intermediate dry AMD.

Milford-Franklin Eye Center is proud to offer this advanced treatment through our Valeda photobiomodulation platform, bringing an innovative retinal therapy directly to our local communities. Patients no longer need to travel to Boston or other major medical centers to explore this treatment option.



Glaucoma Treatment: Moving Beyond Daily Eye Drops

Glaucoma remains one of the leading causes of irreversible blindness. For many years, treatment primarily depended on daily prescription eye drops to lower eye pressure and prevent further optic nerve damage. Unfortunately, medication costs, irritation, and difficulty remembering daily doses can make long-term treatment challenging.

In 2026, direct selective laser trabeculoplasty (DSLT) continued to attract attention as an innovative approach to glaucoma management. Unlike conventional laser procedures that require a contact lens placed on the eye, DSLT delivers laser energy without direct contact with the eye's surface. It offers another approach to lowering eye pressure by improving the eye's natural drainage system.

Other important advances include minimally invasive glaucoma surgery (MIGS) and sustained-release medication implants such as iDose TR. These technologies allow physicians to reduce patients' dependence on daily eye drops in appropriate cases. The iDose TR implant delivers medication directly inside the eye over an extended period, offering an additional option for long-term glaucoma management.

At MFEC, our physicians offer advanced glaucoma evaluations and treatment options, including modern laser and surgical approaches, tailored to each patient's condition and individual needs.

Cataract Surgery: The Next Generation of Lens Technology

Cataract surgery has evolved dramatically over the past decade. Today's patients have access to sophisticated intraocular lens implants designed to improve vision at multiple distances and reduce dependence on glasses.

Among the important developments are extended-depth-of-focus lenses, such as Johnson & Johnson's TECNIS PureSee, and advanced trifocal lenses, including Alcon's Clareon PanOptix Pro. These technologies offer different approaches to improving distance, intermediate, and near vision. The best choice depends on each patient's eyes, lifestyle, visual expectations, and medical needs.

At Milford-Franklin Eye Center, we offer advanced cataract evaluations and modern lens implant options, helping patients make informed decisions about their vision. Our goal is not simply to remove a cataract, but to select the most appropriate technology to achieve the best possible visual outcome for each individual.

Bringing Advanced Eye Care to Our Community

What distinguishes Milford-Franklin Eye Center is our commitment to making sophisticated medical and surgical eye care accessible close to home. Our practice combines experienced ophthalmologists, advanced diagnostic equipment, modern laser technology, comprehensive medical eye care, and a dedicated outpatient surgical facility.

Our Cataract Surgery Center of Milford provides a

EYES
continued on page 15



LIVING HEALTHY

EYES

continued from page 14

specialized, accredited surgical environment designed specifically for ophthalmic procedures. Patients benefit from established surgical protocols, dedicated equipment, and a team focused on the highest standards of patient care. We also believe in transparent financial expectations, so patients understand their responsibilities before undergoing treatment.

From routine comprehensive eye examinations and diabetic eye care to complex glaucoma management, retinal treatments, and advanced cataract surgery, MFEC offers a comprehensive range of services under one established regional practice.

Looking Ahead: Your Vision Is Our Priority

As ophthalmology continues to advance, our commitment remains unchanged: to provide our patients with the most appropriate, scientifically supported, and technologically advanced care available.

For more than two decades, Milford-Franklin Eye Center has been dedicated to serving our communities and protecting the vision of generations of families. We are proud of the trust our patients place in us and remain committed to bringing the future of eye care to the communities we serve.

Advanced Technology. Experienced Physicians. Exceptional Eye Care.

From all of us at Milford-Franklin Eye Center, we wish you and your loved ones a joyful, healthy, and peaceful holiday season. Thank you for allowing us to be part of your care.

For more details, see our ad on page 14.

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Franklin Art Assoc. to welcome Tara Bilotta in January



The Franklin Art Association welcomes Tara Bilotta, painter, muralist and graphic designer based in Norwood, Massachusetts. Her work spans classical painting styles and modern graphic design with mediums including oil, acrylic, pastels, and vector/digital art. Tara will demonstrate her painting style and share information about her inspiration and process. The meeting will take place on January 6, 6:30 p.m. at the Franklin Senior Center. The program is free of charge, and all are welcome.

Tara has received numerous awards for her paintings, and her murals and public paintings can be seen in many towns in Massachusetts. She received her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Painting from MassArt in Boston, as well as a certificate in Graphic Design from the Rhode Island School of Design. Her work is currently on display at the Zullo Gallery in Medfield and West Window Gallery in Quincy.

Franklin Art Association programs are supported by the Franklin Cultural Council which receives funding from the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

Conservation Dept. & Tri County team up for native bees!

Earlier this year, the Conservation Department applied to the Bee Buddies Pollinator Program on behalf of our local schools and was recently accepted into the program!

The Bee Buddies Program is a K–12 learning experience that turns pollination into something students can see, touch, and care for. Using gentle mason bees, students observe the life cycle and see how these pollinators work within a pollination garden, or in this case a wetland replication area. Perfect substrate for mason bees!

As part of this partnership, Tri-County will receive a FREE Bee Buddies starter kit, with mason bee cocoons, a bee house, reusable wood nesting trays, and an easy-to-use clay-mud mix. Everything is designed to easy to man- and school friendly. These mason bees are simple and easy to keep, with no beekeeping experience required.

Through the seasons, students at Tri-County can connect to growing food, sharing harvests, and caring for the living world just outside their classroom door. The result? Curiosity takes off, stewardship grows, and science becomes something students don't just learn about; they participate in!

The Conservation Department is so excited for this opportunity and hopes this endeavor is something students think back on when they're older and working in "conservation". You can read more about the Bee Buddies Pollinator Program here: Bee Buddies Pollinator Program - https://crownbees.com/pages/bee-buddies-pollinator-program.

Franklin to receive over $13K in fire safety grants for kids, seniors

Stow, MA - The Healey-Driscoll Administration has awarded nearly $2 million in grants to hundreds of local fire departments that will deliver vital life safety education to Massachusetts' most vulnerable residents.

The grants represent two longstanding fire safety programs coordinated by the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services. The Student Awareness of Fire Education (SAFE) program sends specially trained firefighter-educators into schools to deliver clear, consistent lessons to young people. The town of Franklin will receive $9,498.34 in this endeavor. The Senior SAFE program is geared toward older adults and delivered through senior centers, councils on aging, and home visits. Franklin will receive a Senior SAFE award of $3,799.96.

The SAFE program was launched in the mid-1990s after child fire fatalities climbed into the dozens each year. Since then, Massachusetts has experienced some of the lowest numbers on record.

In all, 244 local fire departments will benefit from the grants, including 10 regional grants that will benefit more than one community. Departments in 239 cities and towns will share $1,237,610.84 million in SAFE funding, while 240 departments will share $562,389.16 in Senior SAFE funding.



College Prep: A To-Do List for High School Juniors

Junior year has a way of sneaking up on families. Suddenly, students are halfway through high school, and in less than two years, many will be heading off on their next adventure - college!

Junior year is an important time to develop a college preparation plan. Getting organized now, rather than waiting until senior year, can alleviate stress and make the college application process much more manageable.

Juniors, here are nine steps to help you get started!

1. Make academics your top priority. Your GPA and the rigor of your courses are generally the two most important factors in college admission. But strong academics are about more than getting accepted. You're building the foundation for college success: stronger writing and vocabulary, critical thinking, problem-solving, time management, and organizational skills. And if your grades begin to slip, seek help early. Asking for help is a strength, not a weakness!

2. Choose your courses thoughtfully. Colleges like to see students challenge themselves academically and continue growing. If you've earned A's in college-prep math, perhaps it's time to consider honors math. Ask yourself, "How much can I push myself without being shoved?"

Equally important, take courses that genuinely interest you. Don't choose AP Economics over AP Art simply because you think it looks better to colleges. Exploring subjects you enjoy helps develop your strengths and may even lead you toward a future major or career.

3. Start exploring majors and careers. This will help relieve anxiety, build confidence, and provide purpose when selecting colleges. Explore interests through career assessments, informational interviews, job shadowing, conversations with family and friends, and/or community internships. Remember, you are not planning the rest of your life. You are simply taking the first step toward discovering new possibilities. A great resource: www.onetonline.org.

4. Meet with your school counselor. Your counselor is an important resource throughout the college process. Discuss your academic progress, senior-year courses, and college interests. Ask which college planning platform your school uses, such as Naviance or Scoir. These tools can help you research colleges and organize your list.

5. Develop a standardized testing plan. Don't approach the SAT or ACT as an aptitude test that requires no preparation. You wouldn't walk into a chemistry exam without studying! Consider taking a practice SAT and ACT to determine which test better fits your strengths. Then schedule your test around academics, sports, and other commitments, allowing approximately eight weeks for preparation. A strong score can strengthen your application, even at some test-optional colleges.

6. Start building your activity resume. List your extracurricular activities, leadership roles, volunteer work, employment, and accomplishments. Update it throughout the year.

My advice? Do what you love and create an impact! Colleges aren't looking for students who join every available club. They're interested in students who demonstrate commitment, initiative, and meaningful involvement. These experiences also provide authentic stories for college essays and interviews. It's not too late to explore a new interest!

7. Visit a variety of colleges. Start locally, even if you're considering schools farther away. Visit a small college, a large university, and campuses in different settings. What feels right? Rural, suburban, or urban? A contained campus or one integrated into a city? Learning your preferences early can save considerable time and money when planning longer trips.



Maryline Michel Kulewicz and Tracy Sullivan of College 101 Admissions Consultants

8. Have the financial conversation early. Before falling in love with a college, understand what your family can realistically afford. Include affordable options, such as in-state public universities, but remember that many private colleges offer generous need-based financial aid and academic scholarships (merit). However, many highly selective schools meet full financial need but do not offer merit. Visit StudentAid.gov for additional resources.

9. Decide what additional support you may need. Some families navigate the process independently, while others seek assistance from an Independent Educational Consultant (IEC). IEC's have broad experience in navigating the many aspects of the college admissions process.

Junior year doesn't need to be overwhelming. Taking small, intentional steps now will help you make informed decisions, discover new interests, and enter senior year with greater confidence.

Good luck and enjoy the journey!

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Legislators honor MA leading manufacturers for 11th year

Foxborough, MA – At the 11th Annual Manufacturing Awards Ceremony held on October 27 at Gillette Stadium, 48 diverse manufacturers were selected by legislators across the Commonwealth to recognize their noteworthy achievements as leaders in the industry. Good Feels, Inc. of Medway, a cannabis beverage company founded by Jason Reposa, received the 2026 "Manufacturer of the Year" award for the 10th Norfolk District The annual event was hosted by the Massachusetts Legislative Manufacturing Caucus, in partnership with MassTech Collaborative and the Massachusetts Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MassMEP).



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Franklin High awarded $4K from KyleCares Foundation to support student mental health

Franklin, MA — A student group at Franklin High School dedicated to reducing the stigma around mental health and fostering dialogue was recently awarded a $4,000 grant from the KyleCares Foundation to support its student mental health initiatives.

Franklin High School and its Active Minds group were honored on Saturday, Oct. 3, at Kylepalooza, an annual gala held by the KyleCares Foundation at Lake Pearl. The KyleCares Foundation, a North Attleboro-based nonprofit established in 2019, is dedicated to promoting open communication about teen and young adult mental health, with the goal of eliminating student self-harm and suicide. The KyleCares Foundation was founded by the Johnson family, following the tragic death of Kyle J. Johnson by suicide in April 2018 at age 19.

The $4,000 grant recognizes the student-led chapter of Active Minds at Franklin High School for making an impact through its many activities and initiatives that encourage people to seek help amid mental health struggles. The group strives to make this easier for students by reducing the stigma surrounding the topic and promoting healthy norms.

The KyleCares Foundation highlighted several impactful initiatives of the Franklin High Active Minds chapter, including a school-wide assembly featuring Dr. Jonathan Jenkins, a partnership with Unified Sports to hold a charity basketball game, raising over $1,200 for KyleCares, and its collaboration with other Hockomock area schools for two regional mental health summits.

Last year, Active Minds honored its Franklin High School group as its May Chapter of the Month, recognizing its creation of the Hope Garden in a school courtyard, its organization of Mental Health Awareness Week and its growing membership.

Franklin High School School Adjustment Counselors Anne Davies and Jennifer Briggs — advisors to the Active Minds student group along with Health and Physical Education Teacher Michelle Hess — attended Kylepalooza and accepted a trophy on behalf of the group.

"It was an inspiring event that gave us incredible momentum and fresh ideas for the upcoming year," Davies said. "Our student members are eager to build on this progress, and we look forward to collaborating on how best to utilize these funds to support our school community. This funding recognizes our chapter's dedicated efforts to foster open conversations, reduce stigma, and support student well-being."



From left to right, School Adjustment Counselors Anne Davies and Jennifer Briggs accept a trophy from the KyleCares Foundation on behalf of Franklin High School's chapter of Active Minds, recognized for its mental health advocacy and student-led initiatives during Kylepalooza on Saturday, Oct. 3 *(Courtesy Franklin Public Schools)*

From a little wagon to a town-wide tradition:

Celebrating 20 years of Pantry Elves

Twenty years ago, siblings Melissa and Cameron Piana set out through their neighborhood with a simple mission and a small wagon in tow. Door by door, they collected food to help neighbors in need and support the Franklin Food Pantry.

What started as a heartwarming childhood project has grown into something extraordinary: the Pantry Elves campaign are a holiday tradition led by local youth across Franklin.

"My brother and I started the Pantry Elves because we wanted to support people in our community who were in need" shares Melissa Piana DeBaun, who lives in Franklin with her husband and young son.

Over two decades, the Pantry Elves campaign expanded across Franklin and adapted to meet the growing need. Today, rather than collecting nonperishable items door-to-door, young volunteers host online fundraisers. These monetary donations allow The Pantry to purchase nutritious food at low rates, maximizing the impact of every dollar. To ensure every Franklin resident has a chance to give, The Pantry pairs the youth-led digital campaign with a year-end direct mail appeal.

Support from the community is needed now more than ever. Over the past year, The Pantry has seen a 35% increase in the number of children served. The high cost of housing, utilities, and healthcare is forcing an increasing number of local families, seniors, and veterans to make impossible choices between essential living expenses and basic groceries.

Thanks to the support from the community, The Pantry continues to meet local demand and expand resources. The Pantry recently became a SNAP Outreach Partner, offering onsite support to help community members navigate SNAP applications and recertifications.

Beginning in January, The Pantry will offer shopping hours on Wednesday afternoons, offering added shopping options, particularly for seniors and families with young children. Every program enhancement and added support is made possible through the heartfelt generosity of donors and volunteers.

For Melissa, the spirit of giving is a legacy she is proud to keep alive. She looks forward to the day when her infant son is old enough to join Pantry Elves and make a difference.



Melissa and Cameron Piana, the first Pantry Elves to collect donations for the Franklin Food Pantry.

"I hope to pass along the importance of giving back and caring for our community to the next generation," Melissa says.

To help local families this holiday season, please donate to the Pantry Elves fundraising campaign. If a Pantry Elf hasn't reached out to you directly, please watch your mailbox for our year-end appeal letter or visit www.franklinfoodpantry.org

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Feeling Anxious and Exhausted This December?

Your hormones may be playing a bigger role than your holiday to-do list.

Business spotlight

By Danielle Wright, MSN, APRN, WHNP-BC, MSCP

For most women, December comes with a quiet expectation: create the magic, manage the schedule, keep everyone happy, and somehow still show up energized and joyful.

Yet if you find yourself feeling unusually anxious, waking up at 3:00 a.m. with a racing mind, or feeling more depleted than festive this season, it is easy to blame the calendar. We tell ourselves it is just holiday stress—and that once January arrives, things will settle down.

But what if it isn't just the holidays? What if your body's stress buffer has actually changed?

During perimenopause and menopause, shifting hormones do far more than trigger hot flashes or irregular cycles. They fundamentally alter how your brain and nervous system respond to daily pressure. For years, steady levels of progesterone and estrogen acted like built-in calming agents—supporting GABA (your brain's primary "brake pedal" neurotransmitter), regulating serotonin, and keeping your cortisol response resilient when life got busy.

As progesterone begins to decline—often years before periods actually stop—and estrogen fluctuates unpredictably, that natural cushion thins out. Suddenly, the same holiday errands, family dynamics, or disrupted sleep routines that you used to brush off trigger a much sharper spike in cortisol and adrenaline. Your tolerance for daily stress drops, not because you are failing to cope, but because your physiology no longer has the same hormonal shock absorbers.

When you are running on an overwhelmed nervous system, it becomes nearly impossible to stay present and enjoy the moments you worked so hard to create for your family.

At **DaniKate Wellness & Longevity** in Franklin, we help women stop guessing why they feel burned out and start looking at the full biological picture. Rather than offering a rushed ten-minute visit or telling you that anxiety and exhaustion are simply "part of getting older," we take a root-cause approach to midlife health.

Our comprehensive intake, the **DaniKate Longevity Assessment**, begins with an in-depth lab panel designed to look at your health from every angle—including reproductive hormones, thyroid function, metabolic markers, nutrient status, and stress pathways. Once your results are in, we sit down together for a dedicated **one-hour review** to carefully examine every symptom and concern you are experiencing and build a personalized, evidence-based treatment plan tailored to your body and your goals.

If you are not quite ready to dive into a full lab workup, you can also start with a **$97 Hormone Clarity Consult**—a focused conversation to discuss what you are experiencing and explore your options. Should you decide to move forward with the full Longevity Assessment, that $97 fee is applied directly toward your intake.

A Timely Note on Year-End Benefits: If you have remaining **HSA or FSA funds** that need to be used before December 31, both the Hormone Clarity Consult and the DaniKate Longevity Assessment are eligible expenses—making now an ideal time to invest in your health before unused dollars expire.

You deserve to feel steady, rested, and genuinely present—not just in January, but for the years ahead.



About the Author & Practice

Danielle Wright, MSN, APRN, WHNP-BC, MSCP, is a board-certified Women's Health Nurse Practitioner and Menopause Society Certified Practitioner. She is the founder of **DaniKate Wellness & Longevity**, located at 391 East Central Street in Franklin, MA. To schedule your DaniKate Longevity Assessment or Hormone Clarity Consult, visit **www.danikatenp.com** or scan the QR code in the photo.

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Community members share stories in SAFE's "Someone's Reason" campaign

Franklin, MA – SAFE Coalition is currently running Someone's Reason, a fundraising campaign working to erase the stigma of mental health and substance use disorders.

From now until December 31, anyone can make a donation to SAFE, with the added option to share a story about a person or moment that changed their view on addiction or mental illness.

Donations can be made at https://www.safecoalitionma.org/someones-reason or by following the QR code link. Proceeds go to support clinical staff working with teens and adults, programs serving families, and collaborative care services connecting people with vital resources.

Since the campaign launched in October, community members have shared dozens of stories. Some are moments of personal discovery, while others come from a journey alongside a loved one.

Cindy Kucich shared how present judgment can feel when we lose someone from addiction, and how her son's words changed the way she faced it. "There's a look people give you when someone dies unexpectedly and too young," Cindy says. "I remember that look at my brother's funeral. I turned around to see everyone, and I was overwhelmed with the people looking back at me. I turned to my son, and he said, 'Don't worry, Mom. I've got you.'"

Stigma has been shown to make recovery difficult by creating psychological, social, and systemic barriers to seeking vital support.

Labels like "junkie" and "crazy person" can make people feel trapped in an identity they can't escape. And clinicians who read about a person described as a "substance abuser" are statistically more likely to judge that person as deserving blame and punishment. Negative community beliefs can even make it difficult for friends and family members to reach out for help for themselves.

"At SAFE, we have the privilege of listening to our client's stories every day," says CEO and co-founder Jennifer Levine. "And people tend to remember the moment when their limiting beliefs changed. Sharing those kinds of stories with the community has the power to generate more compassion, connection, and collective purpose."

Throughout the campaign, SAFE is sharing #SomeonesReason stories, with permission, that break down misconceptions around these struggles.

To read stories, donate, or learn more, sign up for SAFE's newsletter at safecoalitionma.org or follow SAFE on facebook.com/safecoalitionma and instagram.com/safecoalition.



SAFE Coalition serves more than 60 communities in Massachusetts with substance use and mental health services that close current gaps in care. To learn more, contact us at (508) 488-8105 or info@safecoalitionma.org.

Franklin Rec & Franklin Food Pantry team up for "Football for Food"



Photo used courtesy of Franklin Recreation Dept.

Franklin Recreation's Flag Football League collected more than **522 pounds of food** for the Franklin Food Pantry through its "Food for Football" initiative.

All Flag Football teams participated in the effort, with donations collected during Tuesday and Thursday evening games at Beaver Pond. The community-wide show of support highlights the generosity and commitment of Franklin's young athletes and their families.

Franklin Recreation and its participants across the town's sports programs have supported the Franklin Food Pantry since 2019, continuing a tradition of community service that has made a meaningful difference for local families for more than seven years.

Ryan Jette, Director of Recreation would like to thank NFL Flag Football coordinator Jack Geromini and all the players, families, and volunteers who contributed to this successful food drive and helped support neighbors in need!

December at Franklin Public Library

Special Events for Kids & Teens

Make Your Own Puzzle, Saturday, December 5 @ 1p.m. Design and decorate your very own puzzle with Ms. Kaitlyn! SUPPLIES ARE LIMITED!

Pancakes and Pajamas, Saturday, December 12 @ 10:30a.m. Keep your jammies on and join us for a cozy pancake breakfast, hot cocoa, and holiday music with Jamie Barrett.

Pokemon Party! Saturday, December 19 @ 1 p.m. Catch 'em all at the library for a Pokémon-filled afternoon of games, crafts, activities!

Cozy Animals Scavenger Hunt, Saturday, December 26, All Day - Can you round up all the sleepy animals so that they can hibernate for the winter?

Toe Jam Puppet Band! Monday, December 28 @ 10:30a.m. This hilarious show is sure to have the whole family laughing along.

Ed Popielarczyk Magic Show, Tuesday, December 29 @ 10:30 a.m. One-of-a-kind magic show that is guaranteed to leave the whole family impressed!

Fairytale Fun, Wednesday, December 30, @ 10:30 a.m. Bundle up in your winter finest for a special visit from our favorite Snow Queen. There will be singing, dancing, interactive storytelling and a photo opportunity for each guest.

Noon Year's Eve Party! Thursday, December 31 @ 11 a.m. Let's send off 2026 in style! Join us for an end of the year bash with music, snacks, games as we ring in 2027 early.

Special Events for Adults

Coffee Cupping: A Talk & Tasting, Thursday, December 3 @ 6:30 p.m. *Registration Required for Tasting Portion*

Learn all about the fascinating world of coffee from coffee enthusiast, Rob Fitzgibbon. Sponsored by the Friends of the Franklin Library.

Watercolor Workshop, Mondays, December 7 & December 21 @ 6 p.m. Registration Required, with local artist Sharon Carloni! Adults 18+

Dec. 7 Project: Christmas Tree Pattern Bookmarks

Dec. 21 Project: Watercolor Stained Glass Windows

Silk Scarf Painting, Thursday, December 17 @ 6 p.m. Registration Required, We will paint a silk canvas of snowflakes in white and blue.

Special Events for All Ages

Cocoa and Coloring, December 24 @ 12 p.m. Enjoy hot cocoa, coloring, and a holiday movie classic.

Mobile Mini Golf, Wednesday, December 30 @ 1 p.m. Join us as we transform the library into a Mini Golf course that's fun for all ages*!! *Children under the age of 14 MUST be accompanied by an adult. Sponsored by the Friends of the Franklin Library.

Franklin Library Book Sale Friday, December 11: 1 – 5 p.m. & Saturday, December 12: 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. All books $1

Bag Sale - $5 Per Bag, Saturday, December 12: 1 – 4 p.m.

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A village collection for vets

Last month, a Veterans Day drive for deployed soldiers through the nonprofit organization Thanks to Yanks was held at all four branches of Dean Bank as well as Costello Realty.

Hundreds of pounds of personal care items, clothing, gift cards and cash were delivered by Costello Realty employees Christine Molla and Caroline Molla, as well as Dean Bank's Scott Reilly. Thanks to Yanks founder Michael Shain expressed his gratitude to these community partners in a social media post.

Submitted photos





Rep. Jeff Roy joins Denver delegation to combat rising antisemitism

State Rep. Jeffrey Roy (D-Franklin) recently joined a delegation of civic leaders as part of the Together at the Crossroads Congress in Denver. He participated in a national summit sponsored by the David Merage Foundation focused on combating rising antisemitism, media misinformation, and social polarization. Rep. Roy's work in Denver directly reinforces his ongoing legislative efforts in the Massachusetts General Court, particularly the implementation of the state's Genocide Education Act.



Metrowest Women's Fund holds holiday gift drive through December 11

Drive supports girls 12-18 in Framingham emergency residential program

The Metrowest Women's Fund is holding a holiday gift drive to support girls aged 12-18 living in an emergency residential shelter program in Framingham through December 11, 2026.

Wish List

- Art Supplies
- Beauty Products
- Books for Teens
- Socks
- Weighted Stuffed Animals

Support the Drive

- Donate via Amazon Wish List at https://tinyurl.com/MWFHolidayGirlsDrive
- Alternatively, gifts can be delivered directly to: 11 Byron Rd, Weston, MA 02493

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Historic happenings at Franklin Historical Museum, December 2026

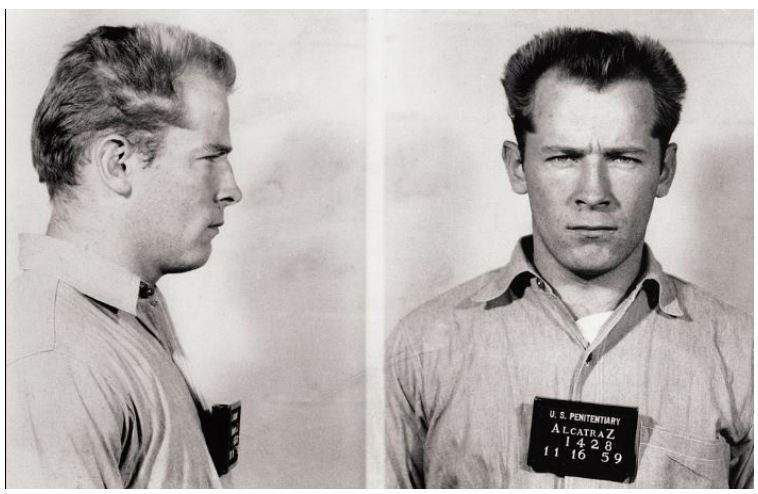
Regular Hours: Saturdays 10-1, Sundays 1-4

Saturday, Dec. 12 -- A Wreath of Franklin at the Franklin Historical Museum

A Wreath of Franklin is a festive day of holiday activities, local shopping, arts and cultural programming, and community celebrations throughout downtown Franklin. The event kicks off at 11 a.m. at THE BLACK BOX and continues until 4 p.m. The Franklin Historical Museum, about a block away, also right on West Central St., is a designated overflow site and will be featuring 5-10 makers, crafters, and others within the museum space.

Also open at the same time is the **Friends of the Franklin Museum Gift Shop,** with dozens of fun and affordable Franklin-themed gifts and stocking stuffers (cash and check only!).

And, of course, you can still visit our exhibits to learn about Franklin's amazing past.



Whitey Bulger at Alcatraz. On Dec. 13, Bob Ward of Boston 25 will be at Franklin Historical Museum to discuss his book on the notorious felon, which he wrote with FBI Agent Rich Teahan.

Sunday, Dec. 13 – Face to Face with Whitey Bulger

Bob Ward, crime reporter on Boston 25 will be discussing his new book, co-written with FBI Agent, Rich Teahan. Ward spent three decades covering James "Whitey" Bulger for Boston 25 News, including Bulger's 2013 federal trial. Teahan led the FBI's Bulger Fugitive Task Force and played a key role in developing the public service announcement that ultimately led to Bulger's arrest in Santa Monica, California.

The book recounts Teahan's hours-long debriefing of Bulger aboard a U.S. Department of Justice jet returning him to Boston, offering new insight into the long manhunt and Bulger's life on the run. James "Whitey" Bulger (1929–2018) was a longtime leader of Boston's Winter Hill Gang and one of the most notorious criminals in U.S. history. For years, Bulger operated as an FBI informant while continuing to run an extensive criminal enterprise involving murder, extortion, and racketeering. Warned of an impending indictment in 1994, he fled Boston and remained a fugitive for more than 16 years. Bulger was captured in 2011, convicted on multiple charges in 2013, and sentenced to life in prison, where he was killed under somewhat mysterious circumstances in 2018. The program, which starts at 1:15 is free, but donations are always appreciated.

The Franklin Historical Museum is located at 80 West Central St., Franklin. The museum is open Saturday mornings from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. (except as noted above), Sunday afternoons from 1-4 p.m. Please Note: The Franklin Historical Museum will be closed on Saturday, Dec. 26. Questions? Contact Alan Earls at 508 560 3786. Visit us online at https://www.franklinmuseum1778.org





On December 12, Franklin Historical Museum will be a spillover site for the artisan pop-up market at the BLACK BOX for A Wreath of Franklin. Franklin-themed gifts will also be available at the gift shop!

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SPORTS

Despite final loss, Franklin golf achieves best MIAA showing in 10 years

By Christopher Tremblay,
Staff Sports Writer



FHS golf qualified for states by going undefeated to win the Hockomock League Kelley Rex Division, falling short of a state win by a combined three strokes.

Prior to the season beginning, the Franklin golf team set three distinct goals: win the Hockomock League Kelley Rex Division by going undefeated; qualify for the State Tournament and ultimately become State Champions. When all was said and done, the Panthers were able to secure two out of their three goals.

Franklin cruised through the Kelley Rex Division without a loss and went a Hockomock League best 11-2 tying with Oliver Ames from the Davenport Division. The Panthers also qualified for the State Tournament, but unfortunately all the golfers didn't have the showing they wanted, and their season came to an end without the team accomplishing the goal of winning a State Championship. The team's only two losses were by a combined three strokes.

Throughout the season, Franklin continued to take things in stride as their top golfers played complete golf match in and match out. Senior captain Ben Burgess scored in all 15 of Franklin's matches, co-captain Tyler Perlman had 12, Bryce Botelho 11, while Albie Lomberto and Ayden Doyle recorded 9.

Although Franklin wasn't able to achieve their third and final goal, the team was able to secure the school's best finish in over 10 years at the MIAA tournament finishing in fifth place, where the top four teams advance into the State Finals. Much like the regular season, Franklin missed out in continuing their season by losing to the fourth place team by a mere three strokes or .75 strokes per golfer.

"It was really difficult to walk off and see the board and how close we actually were to moving on," Franklin Coach Bo Botelho said. "It definitely hurt."

Despite not capturing a State Title Franklin did find itself being recognized through its players. Burgess was selected unanimously by all the Hockomock League coaches as the Kelley Rex MVP, while teammates Perlman and Botelho were named to the Hockomock League All Star team and Lomberto, only a sophomore, got an honorable mention selection. With all that happened during the season Coach Botelho was more than happy how his players conducted themselves on the course and put together one of the most successful golf season's in Franklin High School history.



Franklin golf senior Ben Burgess, who finished 10th in the state competition, with his Panther Coach Bo Botelho, who holds the FHS record of finishing 8th at states.

While the team was producing, Burgess also put forth one of the best season's a Franklin golfer has had since Peter French won the Division 2 State Final as an individual during the very early 2000's. With Franklin now being a Division 1 school, Burgess' accomplishments are one of the best in Panther history.

Burgess, who came to Franklin after his freshman year from LaSalle Academy in Providence, has continually improved his game on the green's over the last three seasons.

"Ben has polished his game since arriving in Franklin," the Panther Coach said. "He has gotten stronger, and as his swing coach, he has worked hard on to improve his game."

The LaSalle Academy athlete was originally a baseball player at the private Providence school and when he realized that golf and baseball were played during the same season he decided to transfer to Franklin High, where he resided. He had also incurred an elbow injury that needed surgery and eventually decided that baseball wasn't worth it and focused all his energy on golf.

Being a baseball player originally, the Franklin athlete never really thought about golf as anything other than a relaxing sport he took part in at the Franklin Country Club.

"I never envisioned myself competing in golf at a high level," Burgess said. "Especially when, my first couple of matches, I didn't play all that well."

Following his first season with Franklin as a sophomore, Burgess was good enough to playing in the Sectional Tournament and so his confidence grew. As he entered this year, his senior campaign, his biggest goal was to make it back to the postseason and put forth a valent effort against to top golfers of the state.

Playing as an individual in the State Sectionals, Burgess shot a 77 at the Wellesley Country Club and finished in a tie for tenth place; leaving him with the best finish in the Division 1 tournament in Franklin history.

"It was a career defining tournament. Last year, I struggled badly and needed to redeem myself," Burgess said. "I was mentally locked in after the first few holes, and my swing felt good. I didn't pay a lot of attention to what was going on, I just knew that, after the first nine, I was in the mix."

When he sunk his final shot for a birdie to walk off the greens after the last hole, Burgess had no idea what was happening; all that he knew was that he felt good and the game he just played.

"Finishing in10th place and putting together the best finish by a Franklin golfer in at least 15 years was incredible," the Franklin Coach said. "I was extremely happy with his performance. In his 13 Hockomock League meets only one opponent (North Attleboro's Maxx Zides) was able to beat him."

According to the Panther coach, what Burgess was able to do, finishing in the top ten of a state competition, is something very rare and tough to do. Botelho should know, as he accomplished the feat himself playing for Taunton in 1989 when he finished in 8th place. Now, 37 years later, Botelho still holds his school's record, while being the coach of a high school golfer who accomplished a 10th place finish.

SPORTS

Young Tri-County volleyball team wins Mayflower League

By Christopher Tremblay,
Staff Sports Writer

Last season, the Tri-County volleyball team went 8-10 and earned themselves a number 32 seed in the Division 4 State Tournament. The Cougars would defeat Oxford in the preliminary round and then lost to the number one seed Bourne in the next round.

Coming into this year, coach Stephanie Caffrey had no idea what to expect after graduating the majority of her team and bringing back only two returners. Thus far, the Cougars have surprised their coach and are playing much better than they were in September; so much better that the Cougars were able to capture the Mayflower League for the first time since 2023.

Four year senior libero Addi Trella has continued to take her game to the next level and is an entirely different individual since her freshman campaign. According to the coach, she had stepped up her game and wants to be the best on the court, and when she is working hard the rest of the team follows. She also has eclipsed the 1000 dig total this season.

Senior Blayke Barrows began her freshman season as a swing player. The last three years, she has been the varsity setter, where she has recorded her 1000 assist.

"Blayke is someone that we can't play without," Caffrey said. "She is the most coachable athlete that I have ever had. You tell her something once, and you don't have to tell her again; she is a sponge."

While Trella and Barrows each have their own skill sets, neither is more valuable than the other. Caffrey makes it clear that the team needs both athletes to function.

Logging a lot of minutes last year as a swing player between the junior varsity and varsity team, Maddyson Pinto is hoping that during her sophomore season she will be able to transition to the varsity team. She has come a long way since her freshman season and became a fierce competitor to the team as an outside hitter this fall.

Senior middle hitter Sabrina Gaul decided to take her game to the next level and joined a club team and developed into a right side hitter this year. Her blocking skills on the right side have significantly helped the Cougars. Caffrey noted that Gaul is always doing the little things as well.

Tri-County also had two junior middle hitters take to the court for the first time in Gianna Jassett and Eryne Sawyer. Both girls continued to play well. As their confidence grew exponentially over the season, they became more of a presence on the court for the Cougars.

"They seemed to figure things out early on and both have become confident in their transition," the TC Coach said. "Both girls bring something different to the team. Gianna is a strong net blocker and is smart with the ball, while Eryne is more like Blayke; coachable, very athletic and sees the game well."

Two years ago, Maddy Benoit played as a sophomore. but last year, she was injured and spent her season on the sidelines cheering her teammates on. This year, she returned to the court and just wanted to play.

"At the beginning of the year, it was, 'What can I do to help the team?'" Caffrey said. "She has stepped up defensively and brings an energy to the court. When she was sitting on the bench last year, she saw things from a different perspective and brought that knowledge to the court this year."

When they last looked at the power rankings for the Division 4 tournament, the Cougars found themselves sitting at number 20, and with the Vocational Tournament still on tap the Cougars could see themselves move up into the teen if they play well.

"We could get a preliminary game of possibly a first-round bye," the Cougar Coach said. "Either way I will be happy with what this team has accomplished this year. When we play well we are really good and hopefully be able to compete





With only two Cougars returning this year to play volleyball for Tri-County, the team's strength, and winning the Mayflower League for the first time since 2023 was a happy surprise. *Photos used courtesy of Stephanie Caffrey.*

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Dec. 2026 Calendar Sponsored by Notturno Home Services

December 2

Veterans Monthly Coffee Social, 10 a.m., Franklin Senior Center, 10 Daniel McCahill St., Franklin, all veterans invited for holiday cheer

Franklin Art Association meeting, 6:30 p.m., Franklin Senior Center, 10 Daniel McCahill St., Franklin, featured artist Alona Popova on Pysanky, Ukrainian art of decorating eggs

Franklin Town Council Decision on Single vs Split Tax Rate, 6 p.m., Franklin Municipal Building, 355 E. Central St., Franklin

Coffee Cupping: A Talk & Tasting, 6:30 p.m., Franklin Public Library, 118 Main St., Franklin, Registration Required for Tasting Portion

December 3

Franklin LGBTQ Alliance Bowling at Pinz, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Pinz, 110 S. Main St., Milford, $10. RSVP franklinlgbtqalliance@gmail.com.

December 5

St. John's Church Christmas Fair, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., 237 Pleasant Street, Franklin

Franklin Garden Club Annual Holiday Greens Sale, 9:30 a.m.- 12 p.m., Daddario's Hardware Store, 528 W. Central St., Franklin, prices $25-$40

Fairmount Winter Farmers Market, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Fairmount Fruit Farm, 887 Lincoln St., Franklin

Franklin LGBTQ Alliance Brunch at Mak's, 10 a.m.-12 p.m., Mak's Roast Beef, 451 W. Central St., Franklin

St. Gabriel's Church Annual Christmas Fair, 9 a.m.- 2 p.m.,151 Mendon St., Upton

St. Blaise Parish Island of Misfit Toys Fair, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., 1158 S. Main St., Bellingham

BHS Operation Graduation '27 Winter Vendor Fair, 9 a.m.- 3 p.m., Bellingham High School, 60 Blackstone St., Bellingham

An evening with folk songstress, Antie Duvekot, with special guest Sean Noonan, 7 p.m., Niagara Coffee Haus, 8 Exchange St., Millis, https://www.eventbrite.com/e/antje-duvekot-wsean-noonan-tickets-1982119962164

December 6

Charles River Chorale Winter Concert "From Stone Walls to Deck the Halls," 2 p.m., Medway High School Auditorium, 88 Summer St., Medway

For more information, visit: https://tinyurl.com/StoneWallsDeckHallsCRC

Winter Vendor Fair, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Bellingham High School, 60 Blackstone St., Bellingham,

December 6

Temple Beth Torah Chanukah celebration featuring Hanukkats by Talking Hands Theatre, 2162 Washington St., Holliston, includes latkes and other treats, games, bring your menorah for lighting, free

December 7

Franklin Winter Coat Drive LAST DAY, collection bins at Franklin Fire, Franklin PD, Franklin United Methodist Church, New England Chapel & Hockomock YMCA

December 10

Winter Wonderland: A Community Holiday Event, 4:30-7 p.m., Franklin Senior Center, 10 Daniel McCahill St., Franklin, includes holiday décor, live entertainment, FFD touch-a-truck, refreshments, hot cocoa, caricature artist, face painting, kids' crafts, local artist gallery, photobooth, raffle baskets, and Santa Claus!

December 11

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

December 12

Franklin Public Library Book Sale, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m., 118 Main St., Franklin, all books $1, bag sale 1-4 p.m. (fill a provided bag for $5)

3rd Annual "A-Wreath-of-Franklin," 11 a.m.-4 p.m., downtown Franklin, pop-up arts market at THE BLACK BOX and Franklin Historical Museum, handcrafted goods from local artists, makers, and small businesses, community wreath display created by artists, families, schools, and organizations themed "The Magic We Make." Updates at https://www.franklinma.gov/1174/A-Wreath-of-Franklin

Franklin Restaurant Week begins, through December 20, find participating restaurants at https://tinyurl.com/FranklinRestWeek26 .

FUSF Cookie Walk, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m., First Universalist Society of Franklin, 262 Chestnut St., Franklin, Shop for your holiday confections from over 30 bakers for homemade treats in our festive Meetinghouse. Cookies sold by the pound and attractively boxed.

BBA Presents Bellingham's Holiday Celebration, 4:30 p.m. parade steps off from Bellingham Middle School, ends in tree-lighting at 300th Park

Exsultet! A Celebration of Voices presents "Wandering Through the Forrest," 2:30 p.m., Allin Congregational Church, 693 High St., Dedham, www.exsultet.us for tickets.

December 12

Runaway Day, 11 a.m. – 3 p.m., Massachusetts State Police Museum & Learning Center, 1 Memorial Sq., Whitinsville,, features Ed Locke, real-life boy in Norman Rockwell's iconic 1958 painting The Runaway, meet him and pose in life-sized diner counter recreation of famous painting. www.MSPMLC.org

December 13

Face to Face with Whitey Bulger, 1:15 p.m., Franklin Historical Museum, 80 W. Central St., Franklin, Bob Ward, crime reporter on Boston 25, will discuss his new book, co-written with FBI Agent, Rich Teahan, who led the FBI's Bulger Fugitive Task Force and played a key role in developing the PSA that ultimately led to Bulger's arrest.

Spiritual Practices Sampler Series with Rev. Chris Scheller: Introduction to Meditation, Sunday, December 13, 3:30-4:45 p.m. via Zoom. Register via the website: Fusf.org.

Exsultet! A Celebration of Voices presents "Wandering Through the Forrest," 2:30 p.m., First Congregational Church, 725 Washington St., Holliston, www.exsultet.us for tickets.

December 16

Franklin LGBTQ Alliance Book Club, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Franklin TV & Radio, 23 Hutchinson St., Franklin, "Days of Awe," by Achy Obejas.

December 19

Fairmount Winter Farmers Market, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Fairmount Fruit Farm, 887 Lincoln St., Franklin, Winterfest with Santa

December 21

Southeastern MA Community Concert Band, 7 p.m., Franklin Senior Center, 10 Daniel McCahill St., Franklin. Join us for an evening of live holiday music. Free, all ages.

December 24

Cocoa and Coloring, 12 p.m., Franklin Public Library, 118 Main St., Franklin, Slow down and enjoy hot cocoa, coloring, and a holiday movie classic.

December 28

Toe Jam Puppet Band, 10:30 a.m., Franklin Public Library, 118 Main St., Franklin

December 29

Ed Popielarczyk Magic Show, 10:30 a.m. Franklin Public Library, 118 Main St., Franklin

December 30

Mobile Mini Golf, 1 p.m., Franklin Public Library, 118 Main St., Franklin, for all ages-

Children under 14 MUST be accompanied by an adult. Sponsored by the Friends of the Franklin Library.

December 31

Noon Year's Eve Party! Thursday, December 31 @ 11 a.m. for children, Franklin Public Library, 118 Main St., Franklin

FUSF New Year's Eve Labyrinth Walk, 5-7 p.m., First Universalist Society of Franklin, 262 Chestnut St., Franklin, meditative walk on a candlelit labyrinth in our sanctuary. Socks or provided booties required. All ages

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Franklin DPW announces 5th Hydrant Painting Contest winners

Thank you to those who participated in our Fifth annual Hydrant Painting Contest!! For pictures and locations of all the participants in 2026 please visit the Storymap: https://tinyurl.com/yveej28h

Congratulations to this year's winners!

1. Under the age of 12 - Dogs and Cats Playing at the Park - Adalyn K. & Isla K.
2. Under the age of 12 - Recycling Truck & Trash Cans - Caleb R.
3. 18 and over - Golden Yellow Sunflowers - Danielle J.
4. Judges' Choice - Ben Franklin - Marie L.

Please visit Franklin's Annual Fire Hydrant Painting Contest story map to see all the amazing hydrants that were painted around Town over the last 5 years - https://tinyurl.com/274pcn6e .



"Ben Franklin"
Marie



"Dogs and Cats Playing at the Park"
Adalyn and Isla



"Golden Yellow Sunflowers"
Danielle



"Recycling Truck & Trash Cans"
Caleb

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The Franklin 250 Anniversary Celebration Committee wants to hear from you

The Franklin 250 Anniversary Celebration Committee has opened a survey form to share your insights. The outline of what their planning process is contained in the presentation document shared here.

Review the outline of what they have and then you can answer 3 questions:

1 - What do you remember?

A place, a person, a tradition, a moment—or a change you have witnessed.

2 - What should we celebrate?

What would make the 250th feel like a celebration of the whole town?

3 - Who else should we talk to?

Who has a story, a photograph, an idea, or a connection we should know about?

Respond to the 3 survey questions here:

https://tinyurl.com/Franklin250survey

Link to download the Franklin 250 Senior Center Presentation

https://tinyurl.com/Franklin250presentation



Source: Franklin Matters



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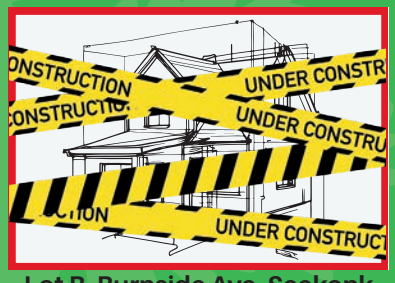

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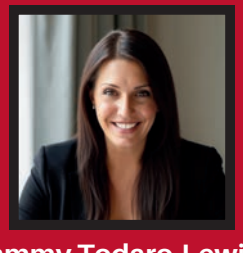

Tammy Todaro-Lewis
Team Lead | Realtor
508-277-2977



Danny Lewis
Builder | Associate Broker
508-509-7713



Miranda Tvelia
Marketing | Realtor
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