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Ashland Cultural Council Announces 2021 Grantees

By CYNTHIA WHITTY

The Ashland Cultural Council (ACC) announced in March the award of 12 grants, totaling \$7,315, for cultural programs in 2021. ACC Chair Isabel Perez said that, though the grantees' reception, typically held in the spring, "is up in the air at the moment, we are excited to return to some



Ashland's CultureFest, an ACC 2020 grantee, was virtual. Viewers can find it on YouTube at bit.ly/311YRqW. This image is from the performance of Ashland - Happy Together (1:05:44). (Image/Perpetual Motion Media)

GRANTEES

continued on page 2

Around Ashland Town News

By CYNTHIA WHITTY

Recent Donations to the Ashland Community Center

The Nourishing Neighbors Shaw's and Star Market Foundation. The Ashland Community Center received a \$9,700 donation from the Nourishing Neighbors Shaw's and Star Market Foundation. The funds are from the Holiday fundraiser, part of Shaw's and Star Market's Nourishing Neighbors Community Relief Initiative. Director of Human Services Jennifer Wuefling, and Food Pantry Coordinator Meredith Madison are looking forward to using this generous donation to help combat food insecurity in our community. The Town of Ashland and the Ashland Community Center thanks Shaw's and Star Market for their support during this



AROUND TOWN
continued on page 5

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GRANTEES*continued from page 1*

sense of normalcy in 2021. The arts are a great way for the community to reconnect.”

The 2021 grantees are:

1. Amazing Things Art Center, Framingham, for “Process”
2. Arts! Ashland Alliance, Inc. for the Dragonfly Festival
3. Culture Fest, Town of Ashland
4. Assabet Valley Master Singers Concert Series
5. Discovery Museum, Acton, MA
6. “Chainsaws, Cheeseburgers and Rock N’Roll-Live” Jesse Green
7. Adventures in LifeLong Learning, Framingham State University
8. Combating Hate and Prejudice, Janet Appplefield
9. Musical Visits for Seniors, “MUSE”

10. Hip Hop Dance Chair Exercise for Seniors, Music Dance, edu

11. “All Together Drumming,” Tim Kane

12. “Stephano,-The True Story of Shakespeare’s Shipwreck,” Hit and Run History

In 2020, “artists pivoted due to the pandemic,” Perez said. “Since in-person events were not possible, artists reached audiences in more dynamic ways, online and by socially distancing. They did the best they could under the circumstances.”

ACC Chair Perez said this year the committee strove to offer a balance with different age groups, focusing on seniors, families, and student populations. To her new role as ACC chair, she brings a deep arts experience. A self-described craft artist, she comes from a family of crafters, painters, and sewers, “every form of art.”

In the past, ACC has sponsored activities around town, including the Dragonfly Festival, the Mystery Book festival, Friends of the Ashland Public library events, the Ashland High School Robotics club, and items for the Art room at the Warren School and Ashland Middle School.

ACC is part of a network of 329 Local Cultural Councils (LCC) serving all 351 cities and towns in the Commonwealth. The LCC Program is the largest grassroots cultural funding network in the nation, supporting thousands of community-based projects in the arts, sciences, and humanities every year. The state legislature provides an annual ap-

propriation to the Mass Cultural Council (MCC), a state agency, which then allocates funds to each community.

Decisions about which activities to support are made at the community level by a board of

municipally appointed volunteers: Debbie Bresnick, Donna Bresnick, Amy Caruso, Moala Kitayimbwa, Isabel Perez (Chair), Visi Tilak, and Tonya Yaskovich.

The Council will seek grant applications again in the fall.

Guidelines and complete information are available at the ACC website, www.ashland-mass.com/236/Ashland-Cultural-Council.

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Ashland Gardeners Ramp Up for a New Growing Season

By CYNTHIA WHITTY

April Program for Garden Growers, April 10

The Ashland Garden Club (AGC) and Ashland Community Gardens (ACG) at Stone Park will hold a free virtual program at 10 a.m., Saturday, April 10. The public is invited to attend. The program, followed by Q&A, will include information on each organization. Chris Gatti, an AGC member and recently elected president of the Massachusetts Master Gardener Association, will speak about the association and its training program. To

attend, send your name to AGCZoomEvents@gmail.com. You will be sent login information close to the date of the program.

Save the Date: Annual Plant Sale, May 8

AGC's annual plant sale is set for Saturday, May 8 at Montenegro Square. At the time of this writing, AGC is seeking clearance from the town's Covid team. The sale will include perennials for both sun and shade from members' own gardens. A Master Gardener and other knowledgeable garden club members will be on hand to help with questions



about plant selection and layout design. For more information, visit www.ashlandgardenclub.org, or contact the AGC president, Gretchen Bravacos, at gbravacos@gmail.com.

The Library's Dogwood Tree: Learning to Prune Tree Roots

Members of ACG took advantage of a warm day last December to learn about tree root pruning. The pink dogwood tree that was planted in the fall on the front lawn of the Ashland Public Library in memory of Lois Bennett, former AGC president, was put into the ground about six inches too deep. Local landscaper Nick Novick, owner of Small Planet Landscaping, pointed out to AGC members that it is common for tree nursery personnel to plant too deeply.

To correct the problem, and most likely save the tree, Novick and garden designer Cathy Rooney of Designer of Greens pruned the roots, as AGC members looked on, preparing the tree for lifting six inches higher in the spring.



Nick Novick and Cathy Rooney, who are professional landscapers and garden designers, volunteer to save the dogwood tree by pruning its roots. Ashland Garden Club members look on. (Photos/Florence Seidell)

"Take a look at trees growing naturally and you'll see that the trunk of the tree flares out [widens] just above the ground," Novick explained. "This is where the trunk transitions to the larger buttress roots that will anchor the tree to the ground. It's called the basal root flare. Most trees in any patch of undisturbed woodland have this flare." Trees planted too

deeply are susceptible to truck rot and primary root suffocation.

The public is invited to attend the replanting of the library's pink dogwood, which is scheduled for 10 a.m., Sunday, April 18, with a rain date of April 25. Pandemic protocols (wearing masks, social distancing) will be observed.





One entry per day/per person.
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Five Ways to Get Your Home Ready for Spring

BY JOHN SZOLOMAYER, RE/
MAX EXECUTIVE REALTY

Warmer weather is coming, meaning it is time for you to get your house ready for springtime! Climb out of hibernation and get ready for sunshine after a cold and hard winter. Here are five ways to get your home ready for spring.

No. 1: Switch to Lighter Sheets and Comforter Spring brings warmer weather, meaning you will not need to bundle up in heavy bedding. Put away your thick duvet and wool blankets and switch to breezier cotton sheets and bedding. Keep a light throw blanket in case the nights get a little chilly. This is a great opportunity to get your bedroom

ready for spring while also implementing a new look. You can even switch out throw pillows and change up the color of your bedding. Having different colored bedding for fall/winter and spring/summer will keep your bedroom fresh all year round.

No. 2: Plant Flowers One of the best parts of getting your home ready for spring is planting amazing foliage and flowers. Plant a few seeds or potted blooms in your flowerbeds and keep a few indoors to bring your home out of the dull winter and into a bright spring. If you are veggie and fruit lover, you can even sow some in planter boxes in your garden. By the end of summer you could be eating home-grown salads!

No. 3: De-clutter and Organize The best way to kick off the new season is to clear clutter and get organized. Go through each room in your home and get rid of things you do not use or need anymore. Make sure to donate anything that is still in good condition and throw out items that have not been used in a while. Once you have cleared out all of the excess items in your home, organize the remaining things. Store things in boxes for later use or arrange things that allow for easy access.

No. 4: Clean Out Your Gutters If you have trees surrounding your home, or even if you do not, your gutters will more than likely be full of leaves and other debris by winter's end. Spring brings plenty of rain showers, so clean out your gutters to make sure that your gutters do not overflow. You can either hire a professional or pull your ladder out and clean them out yourself!

No. 5: Clean Off Patio Furniture. Patio furniture often takes a beating during harsh winter months. To prepare for use during the warm spring months, power wash your patio furniture or wipe it down with outdoor furniture cleaner. Once you have your patio furniture nice and clean, you will be able to enjoy plenty of spring days outside in the sunshine.

Information provided by John Szolomayer from RE/MAX Executive Realty. Each office is independently owned and operated. John can be reached for more information at 508.259.4788 or JohnSzolomayer.com.

Ashland Business Beat

BY CYNTHIA WHITTY

April Fools Trivia Night

The Ashland Business Association (ABA) with the Metrowest Chamber of Commerce will host a virtual April Fools "Trivia Night," April 1, 6 to 7:30 pm. The cost to attend is \$10. Lots of fun and prizes: 1st Place, \$100; 2nd Place, \$50; 3rd Place, \$25. Register online at www.metrowest.org/events/details/april-fools-virtual-trivia-night-10382. The event will feature The Trivia Brothers and Virtual Challenge Trivia with Brett (the Talk Guy) and Nik (the Tech Guy). What is Virtual Challenge Trivia? Check out their video at youtu.be/F91W-EuNLJM.

The Corner Spot is Making a Come Back

The Corner Spot, which closed in 2020 due to the pandemic, is planning to open this year. Anyone interested in opening a pop-up business in the shed should contact Economic Development Coordinator Beth Reynolds at breyolds@ashlandmass.com, 508-532-7905. Reynolds is hoping to hold some socially distanced events there, too.

Ashland Outdoor Seating Regulations

Outdoor seating was important in keeping restaurants thriving during the pandemic. The town wants to see that success continue as the weather warms up. The Economic Development Office is creating regulations and an application to make temporary seating permanent. When the regulations and application are available, the team will email them directly to restaurants and post them on the website, www.ashlandmass.com.



ashlandmass.com. For more information, contact Beth Reynolds at breyolds@ashlandmass.com.

Microenterprise Grant Money Still Available

The town reports that funding is still available for the federally funded Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program for microenterprise businesses. Note that some of the guidelines have changed recently.

New guidelines are in place that allow any business that opened prior to October 1, 2019. 2020 tax returns may be used to fit the LMI (low- to moderate-income) requirements. Business owners can still apply for grants of up to \$10,000 for microenterprise businesses (defined as a commercial enterprise that has five or fewer employees). If you have previously been awarded this grant, you may apply again. To access the online application, visit massgcc.submittable.com/submit. Note that business type exclusions to the grant include: Real estate rentals/sales businesses, businesses owned by persons under age 18, businesses that are chains, liquor stores, weapons/firearms dealers, lobbyists or cannabis-related businesses. Businesses must be located in one of the 23 participating communities.

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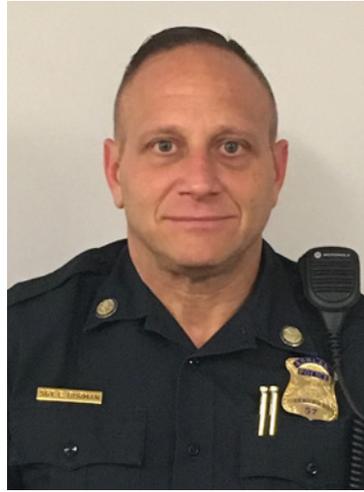
continued from page 1

very challenging time.

Upswing Farms Donates CSA Share. Upswing Farm (upswingfarm.com), known to many residents for their organic produce at the Ashland Farmers Market, donated a year-long CSA (community-supported agriculture) share to the Ashland Community Center's food pantry, matching a share donated anonymously by a community member. "We are overjoyed at this opportunity to provide fresh produce from our Food Pantry," Director of Human Services Jennifer Wuelfing said. "Upswing farm has been a staple at the Ashland Farmers market, and we look forward to having them back each year. Upswing has proven to be a wonderful community partner with Ashland."

Ashland Board of Health Recognizes Sgt. Ed Burman

Each year the Ashland Board of Health honors an Ashland citizen or organization for their efforts to enhance public health. This year on March 16 the Board of Health recognized Sgt. Ed Burman as the recipient of the annual Mary Mortensen Recognition Award. Over the past year, Sgt. Burman spent countless hours helping the town create and implement plans to ensure compliance to the ever-changing COVID-19 guidelines. This work included providing plans, continuity of services, outreach and education to business owners and restaurants so they could maintain COVID-19 compliance. In addition, Sgt. Burman provided guidance and information to the schools to create a safe environment for students. He also helped ensure that the town was able to safety execute three town meet-



ings and several elections. Sgt. Burman continues to advocate for local and regional vaccine distribution.

Board of Health member Chris Daniele, who nominated Sgt. Burman, said, "I've spent a lot of time reflecting on this insane year. So many people have stepped up to the plate in so many ways, but for me, one individual has gone above and beyond. Ed

Burman's thoughtfulness and skillset in logistical planning kept Ashland on the map."

Street Construction Project Updates

The town reminds residents that they can stay informed on construction and traffic patterns for the Route 126/ Pond Street Revitalization Project and the Downtown Construction project by visiting the Department of Public Work's (DPW) webpage, www.ashlandmass.com/160/Department-of-Public-Works, and signing up for direct email notifications.



will process your request and mail you your tag. If you do not use a computer, place your information in the payment drop box outside of Town Hall.

Annual Town Census. Please read the town census form carefully. A reminder that the M or D on the form indicates moved or deceased. Please sign the form and return it to the Town Clerk's office as it is past due. We cannot express how important filling out the Annual Town Census is. The Town of Ashland receives monies for every person we can count as being a resident.

Town Clerk's Office Reminders

Dog tags. The town clerk's office reminds residents to get their dog tags by April 15 and that licenses may be obtained online at on the town website, www.AshlandMass.com. If you have an updated rabies certificate, upload it to the website. The town

Community-Based Scholarships for Ashland Students

By CYNTHIA WHITTY

Several community-based scholarships are available to graduating high school seniors who reside in Ashland. For more information on these and other grants and financial aid, visit the Ashland High School counseling department. Here is a sampling of scholarships offered by local groups.

Each year the **Ashland Business Association (ABA)** provides scholarships to high school seniors residing in Ashland who exemplify community and business spirit, work ethic, and creativity. This year the business organization will offer two-\$1,500 scholarships. The deadline to submit an application and supporting materials is April 30. Students may download an application from the ABA website, ashlandbusinessassociation.com/page-18195.

The **Ashland Farmers Market (AFM)** will offer two-\$1,000 scholarships to graduating Ashland High School seniors, or recent graduates, who are beginning



Danny Ramones and Lucy Watt were the winners of last year's Ashland Business Association scholarships. (Photo/supplied)

studies in 2021 at an accredited institution. Field of study must be in line with the mission of AFM, including but not limited to agriculture, nutritional science, environmental science, and community development. Preference will be given to students who have a history of volunteering at AFM. The deadline to apply is May 1. For more information, visit www.ashlandfarmersmarket.org.

The **Rotary Education Fund of Framingham** provides schol-

arships each year to graduating high school seniors in seven high schools in their coverage area, which includes Ashland. The Framingham Rotary is fortunate to be the beneficiary of a large donation by Rotarian Fred Turenne in 1954 aimed at creating a foundation for granting scholarships to worthy high school seniors. Ten-\$4,300 scholarships are awarded each year. For an application, visit bit.ly/2MYae6x.



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Ashland Residents on Keefe Tech Honor Roll



Congratulations to our Keefe Tech students who earned themselves a place on the honor and high honor lists term I for the 2020-2021 school year.

First Name	Last Name	Grade	Honor Roll	Town
Rhayssa	Beltrami	9	High Honor Roll	Ashland
Emma	Canning	9	High Honor Roll	Ashland
Evan	Lewis	9	High Honor Roll	Ashland
Ashley	Norris	9	High Honor Roll	Ashland
Daniel	Rutherford	9	High Honor Roll	Ashland
Owen	Riis	11	High Honor Roll	Ashland
Hannah	Ciniello	12	High Honor Roll	Ashland
Noah	Prince	12	High Honor Roll	Ashland
Owen	Sheehy	12	High Honor Roll	Ashland
Declan	Ciniello	9	Honor Roll	Ashland

Take care to prevent brushfires

State Fire Marshal Peter J. Ostroskey said, “Early spring is often when firefighters in New England are busy fighting brush fires. As the season changes, the winds can be strong and unpredictable.” He added, “Please conduct open burning safely and watch the wind. Have a permit and to be ready to shut it down quickly if the weather changes.”

22, at 6:30 a.m. they also responded to a 22-acre fire that lasted four hours.

- On June 25, 2020, at 11:44 a.m., the Leverett Fire Department responded to a brush fire in and around Brushy Mountain. The fire burned for 34 days until it was finally extinguished, consuming 66 acres. Mutual aid was critical during the initial days of the fire.

Drought Last Summer Led to Many Brush Fires

Early spring is usually a busy time for brush fires as people rush to conduct open burning before the season ends on May 1. It is also a windy time of the year as the weather pattern changes. The snow pack has melted, but the ground is only just starting to green up and there is plenty of dry vegetation and leaves from last year to serve as tinder. Low humidity combined with dry, hot and windy conditions make

it perfect for brush fires to start and to get out of control, and hard for firefighters to contain. Last April was wet, but May started a 5-month period of unusually dry weather with below average rainfall. As a result, many brush and wildland fires kept firefighters busy across the state.

2020 Ranks in the Top 10 for Brush Fires

In 2020, Massachusetts fire departments reported 5,846 natural vegetation fires, which caused two civilian injuries, 19 firefighter injuries, and an estimated dollar loss of \$217,409; this is a 96% increase from the 2,978 incidents reported in 2019 (which was an unusually low number of brush fires). These types of fires are so weather-dependent and 2020 ranks in the top ten years for brush fires. The Massachusetts Fire Incident Reporting System (MFIRS) collects data on grass fires, brush fires, wildland fires, woods fires and other outside natural vegetation fires, which we refer to generally as “brush fires”.

Brush Fires Tax Firefighting Resources

Brush fires are labor intensive and take a long time to bring under control. Multiple brush fires can severely tax a community’s firefighting resources. Prevention is the best approach.

- On March 9, 2020, at 12:47 p.m., the Bondsville Fire Department responded to a brush fire that started as an illegal burn. The homeowner did not pull a permit before starting to burn yard waste. The fire got out of control and burned 24 acres. Approximately 20 pieces of apparatus and 40-50 personnel responded to this fire. Two firefighters were injured at this fire.
- On March 9, 2020, at 1:22 p.m., the Sutton Fire Department was called to a brush fire in the woods. The fire burned for seven hours and consumed 35 acres.
- On June 21, 2020, at 7:30 a.m., the Southwick Fire Department responded to a 16-acre brush fire that lasted 11 hours. A day later on June

Don’t Delay; Call for Help

If the fire should get out of control, call the fire department immediately. “Winds can fan the flames and fire can spread faster than a person can run,” said Ostroskey. “Use the utmost caution to prevent injury and damage to your own and your neighbor’s property,” he added.

Learn to Conduct Open Burning Safely

Open burning that has gotten out of control is the cause of many brush fires. Open burning season, in communities where allowed, ends on May 1. A permit is required from the local fire warden, usually the local fire chief. Burning can only take place when both air quality and fire conditions are acceptable. “Weather conditions change rapidly, so watch the wind and be prepared to extinguish your brush pile. A sudden wind change is how most open burning fires get out of control,” said Ostroskey. In 2020, fire departments responded to a huge

BRUSHFIRES

continued on page 8

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Your Money, Your Independence

Rising Rates, Sinking Values: Are Bonds Dead?

Interest rates are rising due to expectations of better economic growth.

Economists expected inflation to perk up this spring due to higher prices from pent-up demand. Still, they don't expect the increase to be sharp enough or sustain long enough for the Fed to take action. In fact, the Fed reiterated in March rate hikes are unlikely through 2023, confirming a willingness to let inflation and U.S. economy run hot.

Over the last 6 months, investors have cooled on bonds, causing rates to move higher, take 10-year US Treasury rising from 0.66% to 1.73% ending March 19, 2021. Beyond affecting new mortgages and refinancing, investment portfolios with bonds are feeling an impact.

The Barclays US Aggregate Bond Market Index which returned +7.5% for 2020. This year through 3/19 it is down -3.6%, aligning to how bond performance works: when rates go up, bond prices go down.

While it's early, understand since 1976 this bond market index has been negative just 3

times in 44 years, with the worst return being -2.9% (1994).

So do you abandon bonds?

The better question: why do you hold bonds?

Stability during market stress.

Consider last spring, Treasuries continued to maintain their status as a safe haven during market stress. Other alternatives that could fill that role? In a month (2/13/20 - 3/13/20), Bitcoin lost -52%, Gold down -5%, while Treasuries rose.

Aid in lower portfolio volatility. Risk control and income for those depending on regular distributions from their portfolios. Additionally, investors who can't handle the stress of portfolio swings cause more harm by switching around positions or going to cash, than if they'd been diversified with focus on staying invested over the long-term.

What can be done now?

Diversification. Origins of the 60/40 portfolio date back to stocks and bonds being the only two major asset classes. The evolution and access to indexes,



Glenn Brown

funds and technology over the last few decades has provided choice for broadly diversified portfolios. Within fixed income, consider "Core & Explore". Core stability from Treasuries and highly rated corporate bonds, then explore global fixed income with higher yields - if you can tolerate the higher volatility.

A TIP about inflation. When markets think one way and the opposite happens, shocks occur for extended periods. Markets think inflation is controlled. Trea-

sury Inflation-Protected Bonds (TIPs), commodities, hard assets and real-estate investment trusts (REITs) help hedge against inflation or stagflation. When inflation heats up, stock-bond correlation will increase together, thus these should help bring lower volatility.

Goals-based planning. Financial planners can help implement broadly diversified portfolios to align to an individual/family's goals, needs, timelines and risk tolerance whether you are in an accumulation or distribution phase of your life.

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.

Peter Stone Retires After 50 Years of Service

BY CYNTHIA WHITTY

Peter Stone is retiring at the end of April after serving as a fire fighter for 50 years: 35 years in

Ashland, and previously, 15 years in Northborough.

Ashland Fire Chief Keith Robie said, "Peter represented

this department for many years as its union president. In addition, he was always a leader in emergency medical services (EMS). When Ashland advanced its EMS, Peter was ready by becoming an emergency medical technician (EMT) as an intermediate in 1990 and later becoming an EMT-Paramedic in 2000 with the first group of members to be certified, bringing our ambulance to advanced life support (ALS)."

"Peter was also a member of the Massachusetts district 14 Technical Rescue Team," Robie added. "Peter has always been quiet when talking about himself. We have worked together for these 35 years, and he is very passionate about the fire service."

Stone plans to spend time with family and grandkids and will continue as a paramedic in the private sector. "I've worked with a great bunch of guys," he said.



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Greater Ashland Lions Club

April is here and we're already planning our Greater Ashland Lions Activities for you to enjoy.

We're looking forward to seeing everyone again and hopefully YOU were able to get the

Vaccine that will enable us to be a little more social in the days ahead (still be careful wear a mask, wash your hands).

Lions Day With The United Nations And Lions Clubs

On April 10, 2021 marks the 75th Anniversary of LIONS PARTNERSHIP with the United Nations during LIONS' day. Many Greater Ashland Lions and other Lions throughout the district will be attending virtually this will commemorate our long relationship as a consultative to the Un dating back to 1945 when

lion LEADERS WERE asked to help develop a charter for the UN and start a global conversation on being "connected through service". This is free to all Lions and Leos to attend contact Lion Mary 508.881.5515.

Arbor Day

This year is the Greater Ashland Lions 11th year sponsoring tree seedlings to the 4th grade students at the David Mindess Elementary School (THIS coincides with their science program) a total of 2000 seedlings have made their way home with students to plant in their own yards over the years. Lions International made a commitment in 2011 to plant an 1 million trees to replace those destroyed by fire or diseased. THE Lions responded

and planted 15 million in every inhabited continent and have continued to plant more. The more trees planted THE LESS flooding, the fewer weather extremes, a MORE STABLE AND HEALTHIER environment we live in. What is the value of a Tree? Trees make communities HEALTHIER; they clean the air we breathe, save energy by shading buildings become shelter for birds and wildlife and naturally manage storm water and lastly trees increase the value of your property. This year Arbor Day will be celebrated on April 30th, there will be directions how to plant your tree enjoy watching it grow. for more information contact Lion Ellie 508.875.4513.

Watch for our events being planned for the future: April

12 grab "n GO FIRST 50 free lunch contact Senior center for reservation before April 8, 2021 508.881.0140

Tea in the afternoon

Porchetta, Miniature golf tournament, duck slide race, pumpkin decorating and the list goes on

RECYCLE

Do not discard those items: call greater Ashland Lions we know where they are needed, we are still collecting coupons for educations, tabs from soda, beer, pet food cans, eyeglasses prescription and non-prescription, sunglasses and hearing aids. contact Lion Marj 508.653.6267

Have you ever considered being a Lion? Lions International is waving the en-



trance fee \$35 until June 2021 for members and veterans. Join us on the first Tuesday of the month via zoom contact Lion Mary for more info.

SUBMITTED BY
LION ELLIE TORELLI

Spilka: Senate, House reach agreement

"The Senate and House have reached agreement on a bill to help workers and employers jumpstart our nascent recovery as we begin to slowly emerge

from the COVID-19 pandemic. This agreement strikes a balance to ensure that businesses can continue to move forward while protecting those working hard to

keep the economy going. Time is of the essence to bring this much needed relief to businesses and employees, and so we will act expeditiously to get this comprehensive bill to the Governor's desk.

While businesses require our support to weather this economic storm, our employees need help too. We have agreed to provide targeted tax relief to unemployed workers whose income falls below 200 percent of the poverty line. We also recognize that many are navigating our Unemployment Insurance (UI) system for the first time, and so we have agreed to waive penalties for missed tax payments on UI benefits received in 2020.

To help protect employees on the front lines—and to help prevent the further spread of COVID-19—we are making sure all employees have access to paid leave if they are unable to work

because they get infected with the coronavirus, are ordered to quarantine, or need to take time off to get the vaccine. In tandem with federal legislation, this state response will ensure employees have access to paid leave and employers are reimbursed for such costs. We believe this will provide a necessary and crucial safety net for the employees, especially essential workers, who have shown up every day to keep our economy and communities running throughout this public health crisis.

Finally, the bill will prevent increases in the UI rate schedule for 2021 and 2022, providing employers with needed stability and relief as the Commonwealth continues to recover. The agreement also allows for state borrowing, secured by a temporary employer assessment, to ensure the solvency of the UI trust fund. In addition



to UI relief, to help many small businesses and employers who received PPP loans to stay afloat and save jobs, we have agreed to conform to the current federal tax code to exclude forgiven PPP loans from gross income for small businesses organized as pass-through entities."

Statement from Senate President Karen E. Spilka, Speaker of the House Ronald Mariano, Senate Ways & Means Chair Michael J. Rodrigues and House Ways & Means Chair Aaron Michlewitz

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BRUSHFIRES

continued from page 6

increase (49%) in unauthorized burning and had to have owners shut them down, or extinguish those that got away from owners.

Open burning is prohibited at all times in these communities: Arlington, Belmont, Boston, Brookline, Cambridge, Chelsea, Chicopee, Everett, Fall River, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lowell, Malden, Medford, New Bedford, Newton, Somerville, Springfield, Waltham, Watertown, West Springfield, Worcester.

Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) district fire wardens determine the fire danger rating daily, which assists local fire departments determine whether it is safe to issue burn permits. Weather and air quality can change rapidly, especially in the spring, and fire departments can rescind permits when that happens. Follow local procedures for using the permit on any given day.

How to Safely Burn Brush

BRUSHFIRES

continued on page 10

A Voice for Women in the MetroWest

By J.D. O'GARA

The MetroWest Commission on the Status of Women makes sure voices don't get lost in the shuffle or pushed aside.

"Our job is to basically amplify the voices of those who identify as female in our community, to make sure our community partners, our elected and appointed officials are making decisions with those peoples' needs in mind," said Heather Panahi. She's in her third year as chairman of the MetroWest Commission on the Status of Women.

"Our Commission was founded in 2015. We represent 26 towns and two cities and are actually one of 11 regional commissions throughout the state," said Panahi. There is also a state commission.

Panahi explained the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women, the state commission, was created in the mid-1990s, after a UN Conference on Women.

"The goal was to give a voice to Massachusetts women and girls," said Panahi, of the non-partisan commission. "Over the last several decades, the state has created these regional commissions to be able to better reach women throughout the state."

The MetroWest Commission covers Ashland, Bellingham, Dover, Framingham, Franklin, Holliston, Hopkinton, Hudson, Maynard, Medfield, Medway, Millis, Natick, Needham, Norfolk, Northborough, Norwood, Sherborn, Southborough, Stow, Sudbury, Walpole, Wayland, Wellesley, Westborough, Weston

and Wrentham, and Marlborough.

"Our nine commissioners are basically appointed to their positions; there's no election. You apply, and then they're appointed based on experience. You can serve two terms, and each term is three years," she said.

To get a handle on what women want and need, the MetroWest Commission on the Status of Women hosts public hearings, panel discussions, engages in community outreach programs and hosts awareness campaigns, as well as works with local community organizations and nonprofits.

Members of the commission have also given testimony on behalf of women in the MetroWest region, which is very diverse, said Panahi.

"You have rural towns, you have metropolitan towns, you have towns that are higher on the socioeconomic ladder than others. When we are bringing on new commissioners, one of the things we try to be mindful of is bringing in commissioners as representative of our region as possible."

Areas of focus the MetroWest Commission include reproductive issues last year, from improving access to feminine hygiene

products in schools and jails to maternal health after having children. The group has also spent a lot of time on domestic violence and sexual assault prevention.

"Domestic violence prevention and sexual assault prevention are big items for us and continue to be for us, and COVID has exacerbated the problem, where women are in their homes trapped with their abusers. We've also done work talking about the experiences of incarcerated women in the region, making sure they have appropriate access to the resources they need, that they're safe and that their health needs are being taken care of. We've also looked at economic empowerment, job placement after incarceration, and helping to protect immigrant families, particularly immigrant women and their children," she said.

This past year, the Commission decided to focus on racial equity, hosting a Zoom public hearing on "Racial Inequality Affecting Woman and Families of Color in the MetroWest" in late February.



"The public hearing was really our first step before we start to develop a plan of action," said Panahi. The Commission will use the feedback they've gained from BIPOC women in the region to help identify issues to prioritize, support and raise awareness.

"We recognized we needed to hold ourselves accountable, to make sure all of the girls and women in our region were adequately supported and have access to the services they need," She said, adding the commission itself is also a majority (75%) white, and the group would like to attract a more diverse panel of commissioners.

Panahi suggested that COVID has also highlighted where inequities lie.

"Whether or not people can access Wifi so that their children can learn – those things have become much more accentuated as a result of the pandemic," she said.

In particular, said Panahi, the many immigrant families in the MetroWest face enormous barriers because of COVID.

The Commission also endeavors to listen to MetroWest's youngest women constituents. It has created the Athena Council, and internship and advocacy for women aged 14-19 to channel their passions into energy and action. The 12 members of the Athena Council are girls who've applied from all over the MetroWest.

Panahi added that all meetings of the MetroWest Commission on the Status of Women are open to the public and "any women who want to come and listen and share their questions."

The best way to stay apprised of when the next meeting is to visit the MetroWest Commission on the Status of Women's Facebook Page (you can also find them on Instagram (@metrowestcsw) and Twitter (@MassCSW). You can also find out more at the state website, <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/metrowest-commission-on-the-status-of-women>.

Panahi had a message to any women interested: "We are a nonpartisan group. We want to emphasize that. To us, gender does not belong to a political platform. We want all women in the MetroWest to know we are here to advocate for them, and to listen."



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Ashland Lions Visiting Clubs Around the World – Virtually!

The past year has presented the challenge of our club not being able to meet in person, but there is a silver lining. Since Lions Clubs around the world have been meeting virtually on Zoom, our Ashland Lions are now able to visit other Lions Clubs around the country and around the world! So far, our club members have visited the Leofric Lions Club in Coventry, England. Upcoming stops for our members will include Atlanta GA, Pasadena CA, Ireland and other parts of Europe.

Ashland Lions Club 2021 Scholarships

We are now accepting applica-

tions for the Ashland Lions Club 2021 scholarships. Every year we award four students scholarships toward their college education. The scholarships are open to students at Ashland High School and Keefe Tech. For more details and an application, see your high school guidance counselor, visit our website at ashlandlions.org, or visit our Facebook page.

Annual Lions Golf Tournament

Join us for the Ashland Lions Annual Golf Tournament, to be held Monday, October 4th, 2021, at the Highfields Golf and Country Club in Grafton. There will be golf, a meal, raffles and a day of



fun to support the Ashland Lions and their mission of donating to Eye Research and Local Charities. Sponsorship opportunities available. For details contact Tom Heguy @ 508-881-1122 or Paul Ciccolo at 508-881-2397.

Whodunnit? Murder In Sin City

The Ashland Lions Club is teaming up with Lions Clubs in Sherborn and Bellingham mystery dinner. The event has been moved to Saturday, October 9th, 2021, 6:30pm-11:00pm. Participants will be assigned a role to play in solving a murder mystery! The event will be held at the VFW, 311 Pleasant St, Ashland.

Tickets are available for \$35 on Eventbrite.com under "Murder in Sin City", or call Lion Eileen at 508-861-3226. Ticket price includes admission and an appetizer buffet. There will also be a cash bar, raffles and prizes. Currently only 150 tickets will be sold (this number subject to reduction as guidelines change for social distancing). All proceeds will benefit local hosting Lions Club charities.

Eyeglass and Cellphone Collection

Eyeglass and cellphone collection is a year-round project with collection of used prescription and nonprescription eyeglasses, sunglasses, hearing aids and cell phones. This year, we have already collected 821 pairs of glasses and 5 cell phones!

Collection boxes are located at:
Ashland Post Office
Ashland Senior Center

Sunnyside Café - Ashland
Moody Optical - Ashland
Middlesex Bank – Ashland and Hopkinton
Fayville, MA Post Office
Studio Optics – Framingham

New year, new members

Why not make 2021 your year of service to the community? If you're interested in becoming a member of the Ashland Lions, please reach out to us via email at membership@ashlandlions.org for details.

Stay up-to-date on Lions happenings

To see the latest status of our events, please visit our Ashland Lions Facebook page. Click the Like button and you will be automatically notified of changes or cancellations.

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BRUSHFIRES

continued from page 8

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- Burn only when air quality is acceptable for burning. Local authorities will call the Mass-DEP Air Quality Hotline at (800) 882-1497 or visit MassAir Online to find out if it is.
- Burn only on your own property as close as possible to the source of material to be

burned, no less than 75 feet away from all dwellings and away from utility lines.

- Have fire suppression tools handy; keep a fire extinguisher or charged garden hose, and a shovel and a rake close by.
- An adult must constantly monitor the fire. Leaving burning unattended is a reason to revoke burning permits.
- Use paper and kindling to start a fire and progressively add larger pieces of wood. Parts of a leftover Christmas tree may also be used.

- Never use gasoline, kerosene or any other flammable liquid to start a fire. The risk of injury in these cases is too high.

- Burn one small pile at a time and slowly add to it. This will help keep the fire from getting out of control.

- Burn the fire down to the coals, drown them with water, spread them out, and then drown them again. Completely extinguish the fire before leaving.

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Sports

Ashland Boys Basketball "Enjoys Shortened Season"

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

For the past five seasons Mike Normant has been coaching the Lincoln Sudbury boys' basketball team. Prior to guiding the Warriors, Normant was an assistant coach with Westwood, so taking the position at Ashland put him back into familiar territory playing in the tri valley League.

"I knew the TVL when I was at Westwood and I have a lot of friends in the league," the new Clocker Coach said. "When I left, I still followed the league closely, so I know the teams Ashland will be going up against. The TVL is a competitive league where any team can be successful on any night and Ashland has always been a competitive team."

Over the past few years, the Clocker basketball team has found itself to be a little inconsistent on the court, while its players were always very passionate about the game. With the heart to give 100% each and every night Normant felt drawn to the opening.

"This year has obviously been a challenge to not only myself not knowing the kids, but to them as well with an entirely new culture," Normant said. "With Covid still around we really had no opportunity to get to know the athletes prior to the season getting underway. They didn't know me, and I didn't know what made them tick."

With covid still raising havoc on high school sports, the basketball season was relinquished to a 3 1/2 week season with a mere seven-game schedule. Although it was not what the Clocker basketball players were hoping for, at least they have some semblance of a season, despite being abbreviated.

Having not played organized sports for some time the kids

were glad to be on the court while learning a new system from a new coach.

"Coming in, my original goal was to take things one day at a time and appreciate the opportunity to be in the gym, although as little as it was," the Ashland Coach said. "We had to teach them an entirely new system that I was looking for them to play this year and it didn't give us a lot of time to prepare. We literally only had 10 practices all year long."

Unfortunately, Ashland finished Normant's first season winless in their seven games but provided the first-year coach with a competitiveness during each game.

"We accomplished a lot this season while demonstrating commitment despite our record," Normant said. "I was looking to progress game to game. I wanted to leave the court two hours later being a better team and I think we've accomplished that."

Ashland played their most competitive game in their very last contest of the season and the coach firmly believes that if they had another month and a half, they would have been ok.

Jake Rymczyk, the team's only TVL All-Star and leading scorer as a junior, logged a ton of minutes this year while opposing teams focused their game on defending him. In addition to Rymczyk, the Clockers had 6 seniors, 2 of which hadn't played basketball prior to this year; 2 juniors and 4 sophomores and although they really never had any time to play together the group was incredibly in sync with one another.

Playing in a covid-dealing season with no tournament play the seniors had an open mind about learning while teaching the younger kids on the team. Leading the Clockers onto the court



this past season were captains and guards Jeff Dollaway and Devon Yules. Other seniors playing in their final campaign were guard Evan Litichevsky, guard Spencer Roth, forward Jake Lima, and forward Nick Simpson.

One other senior who would have been on the court for the Clockers had he not torn his ACL prior to the season was Mason Dubabowitz, who was not only named a captain by his teammates but showed up for every practice as the team's vocal support.

The underclassmen gave the coach a sense of what they could do on the court while getting some exposure to varsity level basketball. Next year Ashland will return its only All-Star in addition to a handful of other athletes who will not only be a year older but should be able to provide some good contributions on the court in what everyone is hoping is a regular season.

"Overall, the younger kids got some valuable exposure to the game and were able to learn from the seniors this past season. It will definitely help them come next year," Normant said. "Not only were they able to get onto the court they also got to know my system and what I will be expecting from them next year."

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Planning and Protection Saved the Morgan's Health, Home, and Life Savings

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COUNSELORS AT LAW

Through the years we have seen all too often a person or family who thought all was well, only to discover otherwise at the worst possible time ...

Mr. Morgan came to one of our free discovery seminars a while back. If you asked him at the time, he probably could not give you a specific answer as to why he showed up, other than, "I knew I had to do something and when I saw your information about the education and counseling process, I just felt like I had to be there."

It was fortunate that Mr. Morgan made this decision. We had noticed him sitting in the back. He was easy to spot in his red striped tie but more importantly because he never took his eyes off of us as we spoke. Talking with him afterwards, we could see why he was hanging on our every word regarding protecting your estate and assets.

His wife had recently become ill, and medical bills had begun to deplete their life savings. It had been their dream to live a comfortable lifestyle in retirement and eventually leave a financial legacy for their children and grandchildren, but now all this was in serious jeopardy. It was very possible, he said, that Mrs. Morgan might have to enter a nursing home, which would further rob them of hard-earned retirement savings earmarked for their loved ones.

Mr. Morgan's situation was very personal to our team. It struck at the very heart of our core values of Faith, Family and Finances. It is why we have done our very best to protect families in our community and region for generations! Does this sound like something that hits home for you as well?

Upon learning of Mr. and Mrs. Morgan's plight at our discovery session, we immediately set up an appointment with Mr.

Morgan to dig deeper into the situation. In preparation for our meeting, we did a thorough and complete review of legal, financial and tax matters, including present finances, future goals and, most importantly, the major obstacles (medical and otherwise) that could potentially rob this couple of their hard-earned money and retirement savings. Accordingly, we determined what they wished to do to make their children and grandchildren more comfortable. The end result was that Mr. and Mrs. Morgan were able to stay on track through a solid retirement, estate and asset protection plan we put in place for them.

What about your present situation? Might there be landmines on the horizon which could shatter your future dreams and plans? Based on what has happened to numerous clients, families have been unable to visit and/or coordinate matters from bill paying to document signing. Those who had the right legal documents and financial matters coordinated as well as the right people in place, were successful with what needed to be done.

We have heard of many who did not have the right team and/or preparations in place, and the outcomes were not favorable. How has Covid-19 affected your family, friends and neighbors? What if Mr. Morgan had not happened upon our free discovery workshop and personal counseling session? What might his and his wife's financial future have looked like? Do not let a healthcare catastrophe or another major event put an end to what you have been working towards for your golden years.

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Dennis Sullivan & Associates is a team of caring, compassionate, experienced professionals who Protect Families for Generations.

Book a free online discovery session today. You'll discover why 90% of all trust and estate plans fail as well as what you can do to protect your health, home, spouse, family, legacy, and life savings. You and your family will benefit from the peace of mind knowing you have done everything you can to protect yourself and your loved ones for generations. Call 800-964-4295 NOW to register for a Discovery Session or visit www.DSullivan.com.



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Sunday, April 4

Please join us on Easter Sunday. Our Service starts at 10:00 AM. "Come and celebrate with the Community!"
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Ashland Library News

Effective Monday, Feb. 8, the Ashland Public Library reopened to the public on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. for limited browsing (30 minutes) and computer use (45 minutes). Everyone entering the library will be required to properly wear a mask and sanitize their hands upon entering. Masks are available if you need one. Staff will gladly pull items to be picked up curbside for anyone who cannot wear a mask for medical reasons. Curbside pickup will also be available, weather permitting, on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

If you plan to come into the Library, please note that the entrance (Concord Street side) will remain locked and you will be required to call the library at 508-881-0134 ext. 2 for the adult area and ext. 5 for the Children's Room when you arrive in the parking lot. You will be:

- asked health related questions about Covid 19 symptoms and personal or household exposure within the past two weeks.
- asked for contact information for the Town of Ashland's contact tracing needs.
- advised of time you will be allowed in the library (30 minutes for browsing/per day in the adult or children's area, photocopying and 45 minutes for computer use/per day)

You may be asked to wait if the library has reached capacity. Please note that only one family will be allowed in the Children's Room at a time.

While in the library:

- Masks/face coverings must be worn over the nose and mouth the entire time you are in the library.
- Please use hand sanitizer that is throughout the building
- Practice social distancing by remaining 6 feet apart from others
- Please only touch what you need. Any items you touch, but don't check out, should be placed in the quarantine bins located throughout the library.

- No food or drink will be permitted in the building.
- You will be able to check out your own materials with staff assisted checkout, or the Minuteman mobile app, to minimize handling
- Staff is available to answer questions and help you find things, but no one-on-one computer help will be available.

Please continue to return your items outside in the available bookdrop.

Curbside pickup will continue, weather permitting.

Curbside pickup is still available.

Find the items that you want in the catalog (find.minlib.net) and place a hold listing Ashland as your pickup location. If you don't have internet access at home, please call the library at 508-881-0134 for staff assistance to place a hold. Your reserved items will be held for one week. Inter-library loan and statewide delivery have resumed. This service is available to anyone with a valid Minuteman library card.

Pickup hours:

Monday – Thursday 11 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Friday and Saturday 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.

You will be notified when your item(s) are available for pickup. When you arrive at the library, please call 508-881-0134 to let staff know you are here. Your items will be delivered to the table on the library patio (Main/Concord Street entrance) for you to take. If you need assistance, please let library staff know when you are contacted about pickup.

Returning Items:

Please use the library book returns located in the library parking lot and near the main entrance on Concord Street. Please note that only one bookdrop will be available for returns per day to allow for suggested quarantining. All items (including media) may be returned in the same bookdrop. If a bookdrop is locked, please do not attempt to force the slot open to return items. No items will be accepted in person by library staff. Based on CDC guidance given to the Institute

for Museums and Library Services, any items that get returned will be quarantined. Overdue fines will not be charged while returned items are in quarantine.

Hoopla

hoopla is a groundbreaking digital media service offered by your local public library that allows you to borrow movies, music, audiobooks, ebooks, comics and TV shows to enjoy on your computer, tablet, or phone – and even your TV! With no waiting, titles can be streamed immediately, or downloaded to phones or tablets for offline enjoyment later. We have hundreds of thousands of titles to choose from, with more being added daily. hoopla is like having your public library at your fingertips. Anytime. Anywhere. Sign up using your Ashland Public Library card and download up to 5 items per month.

Introducing Kanopy

Kanopy is an on-demand streaming video service providing access to more than 30,000 films and documentaries from a variety of independent filmmakers and distributors, including the BBC, PBS, A24, and the Criterion Collection. Ashland residents with Ashland Public Library cards will be able to watch 4 films per month.

Set up your account at: ashlandmass.kanopy.com

Then, download the Kanopy app on any of your devices to begin watching.

Minuteman Mobile App

The Minuteman mobile app puts the library in your pocket! Look for the Minuteman Library Network in the App Store and Google Play and download the app to your smartphone or tablet. Search the catalog, renew items, manage your holds and check out items using your camera's phone or use your digital library card to check out items at one of our staff assisted checkout stations.

Photocopiers

Color photocopying is available on the main level and black and white photocopying is available in the exhibit area on the lower level.



Computers

Several computers are available for public use. There will be a 45-minute limit on computer use until further notice. Printing in color, black and white and scanning are available.

Inter Library Loan

The library staff would be happy to help you obtain materials from other libraries that are not found in our collection. Delivery is slower than usual because of library closures so please be patient.

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MetroWest Women's Fund Seeks to Lift Up Women & Girls

By J.D. O'GARA

There was a women's fund in Boston, the North and South Shores, and one in Western Mass.

Despite these regional funds supporting initiatives that empower women and girls in other areas of Massachusetts, there wasn't one in the MetroWest – until two years ago, thanks to Rachel Sagan and Rebecca Parkhill. The two women co-founded and serve as co-executive directors of the MetroWest Women's Fund.

"Rachel and I started the MetroWest Women's Fund in March of 2019," said Parkhill, an ordained Unitarian Universalist community minister, who, like Sagan, has extensive nonprofit experience. "It had long been a dream of Rachel's to start a women's fund in the MetroWest."



Their goal was to make their community a place where women and girls are supported and get the services they need and deserve.

As their first project, the MetroWest Women's Fund worked with Congregation Beth El, of Sudbury, to support a scholarship for a female immigrant who was a first-generation student attending Framingham State University.

"There was overwhelming support; we raised \$11,000," said Parkhill.

The first scholarship recipient was a young woman whose parents immigrated to the United States when she was 2.

"Her dream is to be an elementary school teacher, to give back to the community," said Parkhill.

Since then, the MetroWest Women's fund has supported three local women with scholarships.

The two executive directors term their fund as "locavore philanthropy."

"It's good for our community. These are our neighbors, the people we work with, that we go to school with," said Parkhill.

Following this success, Rachel and Rebecca embarked on what they term "a listening tour" throughout the MetroWest.

"We met with directors and people who worked with nonprofits who served women and girls, elected representatives, and we got everyone together in a community forum," said Parkhill.

The goal was to gain a better understanding of where women and girls in the community were not being served, and where they could step in.

"Part of our mission is to not just raise funds, but to raise awareness, to educate donors," said Parkhill. "Out of all charitable giving only 1.6 percent goes to women and girls. (Women's Philanthropy Institute). It's really breathtakingly small."

Parkhill and Sagan learned about the population of women incarcerated at

MCI Framingham, the state's only women's prison.

"We teamed with Womenade Boston to do a Zoom educational event with Suffolk County DA



Rachel Sagan (R) and Rebecca Parkhill (L) founded the MetroWest Women's Fund two years ago this month. Their goal, to lift up women and girls in their community.

Photography by Elizabeth Laduca

Rachel Rollins, and she spoke about the particular needs of women in the criminal justice system. We had 100 people sign up for that event," said Parkhill.

At the end of the listening tour, three areas of focus for the MetroWest Women's Fund were evident: Education, Girls: Our Next Generation, and Safety from Violence. Those focus areas were paramount in the fund's inaugural grant program in 2020, made possible by Jewish Family Services of Framingham, the fund's first fiscal partner. MWF raised all of the revenue for the grants.

"Last year, we received 14 grant proposals for a total of \$130,000 for requests," said Sagan.

Of that, six were awarded grants in 2020, including Domestic Violence Services Network, Dignity Matters, Family Promise MetroWest, Mass Bay Community College Foundation, MetroWest Legal Services, and the RIA House.

Grants went to help educate about domestic violence, providing advanced educational opportunity—as well as essential hygiene products – to homeless and low-income women, for legal services for low-income victims of domestic violence, and for a peer mentor for sex trade survivors.

The MetroWest Women's Fund just received its 501c(3) status at the end of February 2020.

The nonprofit also just partnered with the Center for Social Research at Framingham State to embark on a needs assessment of middle school girls from 37 MetroWest middle schools.

"We're very excited. This is a partnership with the schools, and there's very little data from professionals about middle school girls," said Sagan.

"We're going to share a report based on the survey's aggregate data, to help the schools. What are the girls' needs, and what are some of the gaps, and how can we help and work together to fill those gaps," said Parkhill. "We want to lift them up. Our vision is to build something that will last – to build a serious, long lasting nonprofit that will serve women and girls."

The MetroWest Women's Fund area of philanthropy includes 33 MetroWest towns: Acton, Ashland, Boxborough, Carlisle, Concord, Dedham, Dover, Framingham, Harvard, Holliston, Hopkinton, Hudson, Lexington, Lincoln, Marlborough, Maynard, Medfield, Medway, Milford, Millis, Natick, Needham, Sherborn, Southborough, Stow, Sudbury, Walpole, Waltham, Wayland, Wellesley, Westborough, Weston and Westwood.

Find out more about the MetroWest Women's Fund at <https://www.metrowestwomensfund.com/>, on Facebook, Twitter (@MWWomensFund), and Instagram (metrowestwomensfund/)

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Real Estate Corner

5 Reasons Why Now Is A Great Time To Sell Your Home

JUDI TELLER AND TRACY BEAUDOIN, PREMIER TEAM, REALTY EXECUTIVES BOSTON WEST, PREMIERRESULTSTEAM.COM

- 1. Buyer Demand.** Buyer demand is even greater than ever as buyers are eager to buy now as home prices only continue to rise.
- 2. Low Inventory.** Buyers once had choices, and decisions were that of which house better suited their needs. Today, buyers anxiously wait for one house to come on the market in the town(s) they are interested in along with the many other buyers waiting for that same house. Buyers are getting creative

with their offers so that they stand out to the seller in hopes they will be chosen. It is a very challenging time for home buyers, but ideal for the seller. Without competitive properties, and pricing your house right, you are certain to get an offer, or multiple offers, very quickly. Looking at a snapshot of the housing market in Massachusetts on March 3, 2020 vs March 3, 2021 the number of single-family homes for sale is down 61.89%.

- 3. Home Sale Prices are Up.** The buyer's demand, low inventory and low interest

rates are pushing home sale prices up beyond what was imaginable even a year ago. If your home is prepared properly for sale, and priced right, it is not uncommon right now to see multiple offers. Not just a few offers but we have dozens, sometimes even more depending on the home. And with these multiple offers comes an offer prices higher than asking, thus driving the price up.

- 4. Mortgage Rates are Low.** With the rates still at a historic low buyer's are able to borrow more and save thousands over the lifetime

of the loan, thus first-time buyers are jumping into the market while others are up-sizing to larger homes.

- 5. Change in Home Buyers Need.** Due to the pandemic, people are working remotely and spending a great deal of time in their home and realizing that they could use a few more rooms. Being close to major highways and public transportation was important and the convenience of living in an urban environment was desired and buyers traded living space for this convenience. This is no longer the case. Buyers want

more living space, home offices, and a yard. A home in the suburbs where buyers can attain more living space is now in demand.

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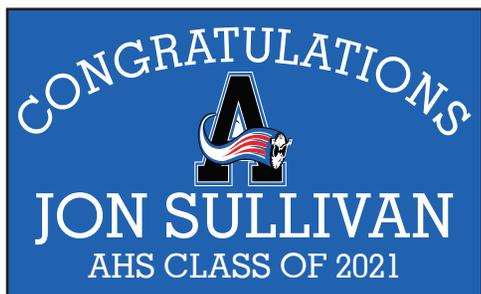
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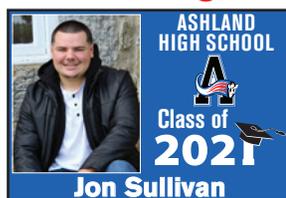
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