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## Millis Ashram Opens Curbside Food Pantry for All

By J.D. O'GARA

**Seva.** The word means “selfless service,” and for the spiritual Sikh community, it is an integral part of daily life – a practice of acting selflessly and helping others without any expectation of personal gain. One act of seva is langar, the act of preparing and serving a free community meal, and in that

spirit, Sikh Dharma of Massachusetts recently opened a new pick-up food pantry, operating every Saturday from 12-2 p.m. in the drive-through parking lot of Woodside Montessori School at 350 Village Street in Millis.

“We’d been thinking about doing this

**PANTRY**

*continued on page 2*

**Dr. Manjit Kaur Khalsa, EdD, President of Guru Ram Das Ashram and Gurdwara, stands in the recently updated kitchen at the Sikh Dharma center in Millis. “Guru Nanak’s Community Kitchen” will provide free meals and as its first step has opened a Saturday morning drive-through food pantry at Woodside Montessori.**

## Franklin TV Adapts, Improves during Pandemic

By J.D. O'GARA

We can’t go to ball games. We can’t go to meetings. We can’t be places in person. A side effect of a pandemic, the need to use technology to see and hear each other has become paramount, and for the town of Franklin, that means putting the

**TV ADAPTS**

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**PANTRY**

*continued from page 1*

for a long time, and in the spring, when Covid came, we decided to start. We hope to serve the larger community, and we're hoping to expand this, to go out into the community to feed people," says Dr. Manjit Kaur Khalsa, EdD, President of Guru Ram Das Ashram and Gurdwara, the New England regional center for Sikh Dharma and Kundalini Yoga, in Millis, Mass.

Members of this community, about 22 of whom live at the Ashram and 1,000 who come weekly (although the center is currently closed due to the pandemic), raised money to upgrade the Ashram's kitchen to a commercial grade space. They plan to use "Guru Nanak's Community Kitchen," named for the 15th century founder of the Sikh religion, to prepare meals for neighbors in need. The food pantry is a part of that.

"It's really needed right now, considering the state of everything going on," says Edwin Meglio, food pantry coordinator. Meglio, who has come to the center for years for yoga and



**This chilly, sunny Saturday, volunteers stand ready to place bagged food directly into the trunks of those who need it. From left, Gurumeet Khalsa, Japa Saraswati, and Dharma Khalsa.**



**Volunteers place bags directly into recipients' vehicles. Shown, Edwin Meglio and Japa Saraswati.**

meditation, has used his experience in the national food industry to get the pantry up and running.

"We got together and learned the rules and regulations of distributing food to people," says Meglio, who has received generous donations of non-perishable foods and toiletries from Trader Joes, among others. "We want to make sure we're being as careful as possible, as half the people (who live) at the Ashram are 50 and over and at higher risk (for Covid). Our team is extremely careful to be vigilant that we do everything exactly according to the CDC and state guidelines."

Anyone from Massachusetts is welcome "We're trying to help as many people as possible," says

Meglio, who has reached out to the Franklin Senior Center to work on getting food delivered to local homebound seniors. "Sometimes people who need the food don't have the means to come and get it," he says.

Since the Ashram is a vegetarian community, the foods distributed are vegetarian and as natural as possible, with most in bpa-free packaging. "We offer non-perishable foods that are cleaned and bagged up, stapled and sealed, along with personal hygiene items that are separate from the food," says Meglio, adding, "We're not looking to



**Volunteers ready bags filled with meat-free, non-perishable food, along with bags of toiletries, for distribution. Rear: Dr. Khalsa, Front, from left: Siri Sevak and Edwin Meglio, Food Pantry Coordinator.**

influence anyone religiously or spiritually, and there's no obligation to come to a service or anything like that."

Down the road, Dr. Khalsa envisions a community garden on the being added to the mix.

"We have land we hope to farm, and we'll educate people on how to grow their own vegetables," she says.

In the future, Meglio plans to conduct food drives for the food relief program. Right now, Guru Nanak's Community Kitchen is accepting monetary donations at its website, [www.Nanakskitchen.org](http://www.Nanakskitchen.org), and those interested in volunteering can contact Edwin at [edwin@nanakskitchen.org](mailto:edwin@nanakskitchen.org).





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TV ADAPTS

continued from page 1

resource that is Franklin TV to work.

“It’s about connectedness,” says Pete Fasciano, Executive Director, Franklin.TV & wfpr.fm.

It’s about getting information out on the virus, information out on where things are at the local level. Town business must go on.”

Franklin TV needed to keep people connected during Covid-19. Doing that with everything shuttered meant adapting, fast.

“We scrambled early on to add new technical capabilities across the facility. That meant controlling everything remotely, and enhancing our ability to be able to touch any desktop in the facility,” says Fasciano. The studio had to scale up to equip all of the three dozen desktop computers the facility uses with its software app, Anydesk, and add more computers in different places in the organization. .

No use of the studio meant making sure everyone also had the ability to work remotely, from the staff of Fasciano, three full-time production personnel, an engineering manager and sev-



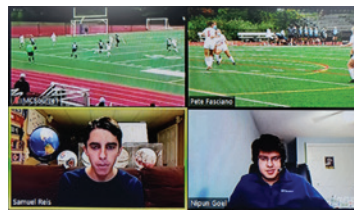
Franklin Town Counselors conduct a live meeting last June on Franklin High School football field. Franklin TV announcers provided live coverage.

eral freelancers, to town authorities at Franklin Town Chambers. Announcers were given access to work remotely for the sports cast, and the radio station needed to provide them with that kind of access as well as audio equipment. The station shipped that audio equipment directly to people recording their shows.

“Zoom has become the digital transport means for most of our live programming,” says Fasciano. “Meetings are now more interactive, enabling town officials, committee members, experts, presenters and residents to communicate freely in real-time.”

That looks like weekly discussions with Jamie Hellen and

other officials, working with Steve Sherlock of Franklin Matters, says Fasciano, adding, “We have become quite active covering Franklin high school’s varsity sports as live events via Zoom. This became a major priority since parents could no longer attend events to watch their kids play. Our announcers also work remotely from their homes, watching and commenting on the games via Zoom. To facilitate multi-camera sports coverage, we designed and constructed three video ‘flypacks’ - basically a ready-to-air TV control room in a fold-up, forty pound box. Unfold box. Connect cameras. Zoom.”



With parents not able to attend all sporting events, Franklin TV provided access, with announcers working from home to call events.



Franklin TV worked to ensure residents had access to live Zoom meetings.

This method has allowed Franklin TV to support other organizations as well, including the Franklin Senior Center, the Recreation Department, the Black Box, and local boy scouts, to provide streaming coverage where a live audience can’t attend.

“Our staff is actually working remotely on shoots, shooting people on location out in the open,” says Fasciano. Crews go out to meet the people they’re filming on location in town.

Franklin TV’s radio station has almost doubled its programming since the pandemic began.

“We distributed podcast microphone kits to our radio volunteers to connect them all together and to the radio station via Zoom,” says Fasciano. “Steve Sherlock, Jim Derick, Frank Falvey, Jay Horrigan, Anne Ber-

gen, Pandora Carlucci, Michael Walker-Jones, and Jeff Roy, have all been engaged in enhancing our community connectedness in a time of increased social isolation through their ongoing radio programs and audio podcasts. People can work out of their living rooms and dens and offices at home. We just needed to provide them with the equipment to connect.”

Fasciano sees “the sweeping technical changes that we have made” as “a permanent part of our newer, better normal. Failure is not an option.”

Right now, the studio continues to remain closed, and Fasciano says opening continues to be “a moving target,” dependent upon the progress with vaccines.

All past programming is available in the archives at the Franklin TV website, www.franklin.tv.

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# THE BLACK BOX to present Disney Stars of Broadway

THE BLACK BOX, the region's premiere concert, theater, and event venue, will present three Disney Stars of Broadway: Broadway's original "Mary Poppins" Ashley Brown, current "Genie" Michael James Scott, and original "Tarzan" Josh Strickland on April 16 to kick off Spring Arts Awakening- nine weeks of entertainment, outdoors under a tent in the venue's parking lot. The trio will perform an evening of Disney favorites. There will be limited seating for this special evening out in Franklin. Founder of THE BLACK BOX Raye Lynn Mercer comments, "Hosting Disney Royalty and presenting them in concert together at TBB is a huge honor. We are able to offer this unique opportunity to see three Disney and Broadway stars on stage in Franklin. It will be a night to remember!"

Ashley Brown originated the title role in *Mary Poppins* on Broadway, for which she received Outer Critics, Drama League, and Drama Desk nominations for Best Actress. Ms. Brown's other Broadway credits include

star turns as Belle in *Beauty and The Beast*, *The Sound Of Music*, and *Disney's On The Record*. Ms. Brown has also performed with virtually all of the top orchestras in North America, including the Boston Pops, the New York Philharmonic, The Hollywood Bowl Orchestra at Disnaey Hall, The Pittsburgh Symphony, the New York Pops at Carnegie Hall, and more. Ms. Brown's PBS special called "Ashley Brown: Call Me Irresponsible" received a PBS Telly Award. Ms. Brown is the voice of Disneyland's 60th anniversary celebrations, singing the newly-penned Richard Sherman song, "A Kiss Goodnight." Both Ms. Brown's album of Broadway and American Songbook standards "Speak Low" and her newly recorded Christmas EP "The Secret of Christmas" are available on Ghostlight/Warner Brothers.

Michael James Scott has played the Genie in Disney's *Aladdin* internationally including Broadway, London, the North American Tour and originating



the role in the Australian Production for which he won the prestigious Helpmann Award. He's also known for originating the role of the Minstrel on Broadway in *Something Rotten* and originating

Dr. Gotswana (aka The Maggots Guy) in the Tony winning phenomenon *The Book of Mormon*. Other Broadway credits include *Mamma Mia*, *Tarzan*, *All Shook Up*, *The Pirate Queen*, *Elf* and *Hair*. On the West End he was the associate choreographer and performed in the Broadway revival transfer of *Hair*. Scott was the standby for the legendary Ben Vereen in the Int. tour of *Fosse*, taking over the role in Paris, France at the Théâtre du Châtelet.

In 2006, Josh Strickland created the leading role of Tarzan in Disney's musical *Tarzan* on

Broadway. In 2009, he made his starring Las Vegas debut in Peepshow at Planet Hollywood Casino & Resort while concurrently co-starring in the hit E! reality show *Holly's World*. Strickland debuted his first single "Report to the Floor," which skyrocketed to the top-five on the iTunes Dance Charts the first week of its release, followed by "Last Dance." In 2013, Strickland joined the cast of Vegas! The Show at the Planet Hollywood Casino & Resort in Las Vegas in a starring role. Strickland has also appeared internationally with the all-star cast of Disney's Broadway Hits, including the Emmy®-winning concert at Royal Albert Hall in London, England. He most recently reprised his role as Tarzan in Disney's *Tarzan* in Oberhausen, Germany at the Stage Metronom Theatre.

According to Mercer, "The Disney Stars of Broadway show is a fantastic way to kick off our Spring Arts Awakening and we look forward to welcoming audiences back to the theater." The Spring Arts Awakening celebrates a comeback for arts and entertainment and offers an opportunity to support THE BLACK BOX in its recovery from the pandemic. To purchase tickets for this special concert, visit [www.THEBLACKBOXonline.com](http://www.THEBLACKBOXonline.com) or call the box office at (508) 528-3370.

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are not along busy roads.

The first 100 volunteers will receive a t-shirt and a small sapling.

To register, visit [www.franklinrecreation.activityreg.com](http://www.franklinrecreation.activityreg.com), click on "Register for Activities," and click "Earth Day" from the menu.

# Franklin to Close Davis Thayer Elementary

After nearly a year and a half of study, the Franklin School Committee voted at its February 9, 2021 meeting to close the Davis Thayer Elementary School beginning with the 2021-2022 school year. This has been a very emotional decision as this involves the retirement of a beloved second home to so many families, students, and faculty and staff both during current times as well as historically. The school was built in 1924 and has served so many generations of Franklin students. The decision was made based on reduced enrollment, educational adequacy of an aging building, and financial efficiency. Notably, there has been a significant enrollment decline. This is not a result of students leaving Franklin for other choices. The decrease in enrollment is a trend that is happening in many regions, especially in the Northeast/Massachusetts.

The main focus at this time is to plan and implement a transition for Davis Thayer students to the Keller Elementary School, being sure to attend to their social-emotional and academic needs. The Facilities Analysis Subcommittee recommended that the School Committee begin to examine space utilization across all of the district's schools as the architect's report highlighted some needs, particularly at our "stand-alone" schools (Kennedy and Parmenter) as well as some potential opportunities which include redistricting.

More background information can be found on our website: <https://www.franklinps.net/district/davis-thayer-facilities-analysis>.



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# 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,

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. Treasury 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](http://www.PlanDynamic.com). Glenn is a fee-only Certified Financial Planner™ helping motivated people take control of their planning and investing, so they can balance kids, aging parents and financial independence.*



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

DENNIS SULLIVAN & ASSOCIATES,  
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 co-

ordinate 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.

Our team Protects Families for Generations. What do you and your loved ones need to know now for your lifetime? You and your family may very well be our next success story.

Through our unique program you can complete all of your important protection virtually (online), staying warm, safe, and healthy in the comfort of your home, while a team of experienced, caring, compassionate professionals creates a comprehensive health estate and asset protection plan that provides you and your family members total peace of mind now and for generations that follow.

The most important phone call you can make today is to our discovery line 800-964-4295 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) or (781) 237-2815 (weekdays) to register for a Discovery Session and to see if you qualify for a personalized review and counseling session. You can also register online at [DSullivan.com](http://DSullivan.com). Due to the current pandemic, we are doing our best as essential service providers to help those who qualify, understand how much they can and should do for their family now!

*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](http://www.DSullivan.com).*

*Herbert F Hunter, CPA*

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#projectenvoy

February 1- April 30

# BFCCPS Student Collects Glasses for Franklin Lions

On February 17, 2021, the Franklin MA Lions President Kristine Shanahan received eyeglasses collected by Nidhi Ramesh, an 8th grade student from Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter Public school. Nidhi selected eyesight as a capstone community service project. She collected eyeglasses for the Franklin Lions. She has learned first-hand how deeply committed the Lions organization (internationally and Statewide) is to alleviating blindness.



Photo by Franklin MA Lions

At the 1925 International Lions Convention in Ohio, Helen Keller charged the Lions to become the “Knights of the Blind in the crusade against darkness.” Franklin MA Lions Club supports the MA Lions Eye Research Foundation for its continuing fight against the darkness.

For information on MLERF contact: [franklinmalions@gmail.com](mailto:franklinmalions@gmail.com)

# Town of Franklin Annual Earth Day Cleanup April 24th

The Town of Franklin will celebrate Earth Day with a cleanup on Saturday, April 24, 9 a.m. -12 p.m. Volunteers can pick up trash bags and gloves (please bring garden gloves), as well as a small map of cleanup sites for them to take and go. Locations include children-friendly sites (parks/playgrounds/

schools) that are not along busy roads.

The first 100 volunteers will receive a t-shirt and a small sapling.

To register, visit [www.franklinrecreation.activityreg.com](http://www.franklinrecreation.activityreg.com), click on “Register for Activities,” and click “Earth Day” from the menu.

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Hours: Monday - Thursday: 7 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., Friday: 7 a.m. - 3 p.m.  
Saturday: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. CLOSED Sunday

## Franklin DPW Update: Work to be Completed in 2021

- Mackintosh Neighborhood Water lines – Contractor CJP & Sons to start work in April.
- Construction cost is approx. \$1M
- Lincoln St Roadway Improvements – Contractor D’Ambra Construction to start work in April. Construction cost is approx. \$1M
- Beaver St Sidewalk Extension – from Rte 140 to the field at Chilson Park, project has been approved by ConCom, we will complete bid documents and go out to bid in the next few weeks – early estimate is around \$250,000
- Chilson Park/Beaver Pond Expansion – We are designing the Recreation Dept, project has been approved by ConCom, was to go out to bid in March – funding is from Rec Dept, budget was around \$200,000
- Colt Rd Neighborhood Drain Lining Project – bids were opened Friday 2/26, we are reviewing the bids. Construction cost approximately \$175,000.
- Meadowlark Rd Bio-retention Area – this is part of the most recent 319 grant, project has been permitted thru ConCom and we will need to go out to bid. Expected bid opening in March/April with a budget of around \$75,000.
- We are in the process of reviewing other potential road work projects, including chip sealing and crack sealing, vs. what we have in available funding.

## Two \$1,000 Scholarships Offered by Knights of Columbus, Sacred Heart Council 1847, Franklin, MA

Knights of Columbus 1847 in Franklin, MA is accepting applications for two \$1,000 Scholarships. The applicants must be a registered member of St. Mary’s Parish in Franklin and must be graduating from High School in the Spring 2021 and progressing onto their first year of study at a 2- or 4-year college/ university. Please submit a complete our Scholarship Application post-marked on or before the Application Deadline of Friday April 16, 2021.

The application form is available from the banner on the St. Mary’s Parish, Franklin website or on the Knights of Columbus 1847 website <https://www.kofc1847.org>.

## April Services at St John’s Episcopal Church, Franklin

**Mauudy Thursday** - April 1st, 7 p.m. on Facebook Live

**Easter Day** - April 4th  
9 a.m. - Easter Egg Hunt  
10 a.m. - Drive-in Service of Resurrection

**Good Friday** - April 2  
Stations of the Cross: see [StJohnsFranklinMA.org](http://StJohnsFranklinMA.org) pre-recorded with Franklin United Methodist Church and Franklin Federated Church

**Listen on your car radio or Facebook Live**  
St. John’s is located at 237 Pleasant Street in Franklin.

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# Celebrate your Graduate!



The Class of 2021 has experienced the most unusual senior year of our lifetimes!

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- ▽ Spring Football
- ▽ Face Coverings

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# Living Healthy

## Glaucoma Treatment: SLT

### 10 Commonly Asked Questions

BY ROGER M. KALDAWY, M.D.  
Milford Franklin Eye Center

Lasers can be very useful in treating many eye problems from helping patients eliminate the need for glasses to cosmetic procedures of the eyelids and bladeless cataract surgery to treatment of glaucoma.

Glaucoma is a condition that can damage our field of vision. It affects us when the pressure inside the eye is higher than what the eye can tolerate. Glaucoma is treatable with drops targeted at lowering the eye pressure. Laser technology can also be used in a focused beam of light to treat the drainage angle of the eye in an additional attempt to lower the pressure. This surgery makes it easier for fluid to flow out of the front part of the eye, decreasing pressure inside the eye. Selective

laser trabeculoplasty or SLT is the name of the laser procedure used to lower the pressure. SLT has been in use for more than 25 years in the United States and around the world.

#### 1. Who is a candidate for SLT?

Patients who have primary or secondary open-angle glaucoma (the drainage system in the front part of the eye is open) and are in need of lowering of their intraocular pressure (IOP) are eligible for the procedure. Your eye doctor will make the final determination if you are a candidate.

2. **How does it work?** Laser energy is applied to the drainage tissue in the eye. This starts a chemical and biolog-

ical change in the tissue that results in better drainage of fluid through the drain and out of the eye. This eventually results in lowering of IOP. It may take 1-3 months for the results to appear.

#### 3. Why is it called Selective?

The type of laser used has minimal heat energy absorption because it is only taken up by selected pigmented tissue in the eye. Sometimes it is referred to as a "cold laser." Because of this, the procedure produces less scar tissue and has minimal pain.

4. **What are the risks?** One key aspect of SLT is a favorable side effect profile, even when compared with glaucoma medications. Post-operative inflammation is common but generally mild, and

treated with observation or eye drops or an oral non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug. There is an approximately 5% incidence of IOP elevation after laser, which can be managed by glaucoma medications and usually goes away after 24 hours.

#### 5. How effective is it and how long does it last?

SLT lowers the IOP by about 30% when used as initial therapy. This is comparable to the IOP lowering of the most powerful and commonly used class of glaucoma medication (prostaglandin analogs). This effect may be reduced if the patient is already on glaucoma medications. The effect will generally last between 1-5 years, and in some cases, longer than that. If it does not last at least 6-12 months, it is usually not considered successful.

#### 6. What happens if it wears off?

If SLT is effective at lowering IOP, but this wears off over several years, the procedure can be repeated. Repeat treatments may or may not lower IOP as much as the first, and continued repeat laser will eventually not be effective. Some doctors may elect to treat half of the tissue on the first treatment, then treat the second half at a later date (this is not considered repeat treatment, and is completion of treatment). If SLT is not initially successful, repeat treatment is not likely to be effective. Alternatively, glaucoma medication can be used if the effect wears off over time.

#### 7. What happens if it doesn't work?

If SLT fails to lower the IOP, then the glaucoma is treated by other means such as additional medications or surgery. The laser does not affect the success of these other types of treatment.

8. **What is the cost?** Since the procedure is an accepted glaucoma treatment, and is FDA approved, it is covered by Medicare and medical insurance. The cost for an uninsured individual or with an insurance co-pay will vary.

#### 9. Will I still need to use glaucoma medications?

Some patients can be controlled with just laser treatment. Others require additional IOP lowering and may therefore need to use glaucoma medication as well. Think of the SLT as equivalent to one glaucoma medication. Just as some patients will require more than one glaucoma medication to control their IOP, some may also require laser plus one or more glaucoma medications. It is important to remember that SLT is not a cure for glaucoma, just as medication and surgery are not. Whatever method is used to treat glaucoma, appropriate follow up and testing with your eye care professional is critical.

#### 10. What are the alternative laser treatments?

Other similar procedures are argon laser trabeculoplasty (ALT) and micropulse laser trabeculoplasty (MLT). ALT was the first laser trabeculoplasty procedure. It uses a thermal (heat) laser and may cause more scarring in the drainage angle than SLT, which may also limit its ability to be repeated. MLT was designed to reduce the amount of energy delivered to ocular tissues by pulsing the energy in small increments. It therefore has similar potential benefits as SLT in terms of lower inflammation, tissue scarring and ability to repeat.



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# Living Healthy

## Tri-County RVTHS Names Captains' Council

Tri-County RVTHS recently named the Captains' Council's newest members. A position on the Council is given to those athletes with whom teammates and coaches respect and trust to lead their teams and the Athletic Department in the right direction. It is not a guarantee of appointment as a team captain. It is a commitment to the idea that you do not have to be a team captain to be a leader and that there are many ways to lead. Being a member of this Captains' Council is a commitment to improving your game mentally and to becoming a life-long competitor.

### Class of 2021 Members:

Jenna Barber, Gina Castagna, Brody Dalzell, Bryce Dalzell, Grace Donahue, A.J. Fusco, Rob Johnson, Karoline McNamara, Cam Schweitzer, T.J. Sedam, Annabelle Yeaton

### Class of 2022 Members:

Sarah Bakas, Izzy Dias, Matthew Dowd, Rebekah Gable, Jonah Joyce-Vorce, Vanessa Hurley, Teaghan Leblanc, Silas Noble

### Class of 2023 Members:

Lorcan Bergeron, Zachary Blenkhorn, Faith Boutin, Joseph Cady, Ava Cavallaro, Ava D'Amadio, Amy Freitas, Isabella Gulley, Noelle Kennedy

These athletes will participate in a number of leadership trainings, team building exercises, and community service opportunities.

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ABA-based Educational Therapy

## EYES

continued from page 12

### In summary:

SLT is a laser treatment for open-angle glaucoma that lowers eye pressure. It can be used as initial treatment, instead of eye drop medications, or as additional treatment when medications do not adequately reduce the eye pressure. It is often effective, but that effectiveness may wear off after some period of time. It can be repeated but the effect may be reduced with repeat treatment. SLT is not a cure for glaucoma but one of many tools to keep it under control. At Milford Franklin Eye Center, Dr. Kaldaway was

among the first surgeons to offer SLT in the area. We perform the procedure in a state-of-the-art surgery center in Milford and closer to home. With this center available to you here in your backyard, there is no reason to travel hours to have eye surgery and laser glaucoma surgery. If your eye provider is still recommending you travel miles away to have surgery, we are available for a second opinion! We are proud to offer excellence in SLT- laser glaucoma surgery with world class outcomes, and here is the great news: Here, in Milford, and closer to home than ever before!

For more details, see our ad on page 12.

## Primary Care in Your Community Welcome Jonathan Andersen, DO

Milford Regional Physician Group (MRPG) is proud to welcome our new primary care physician, Jonathan Andersen, DO. He joins Elena Smagina, MD; Marisa Albert, MSN, RN, FNP-BC; and Maria Sullivan, APRN, CS at Family Medicine Associates in Medway.

Board-certified in family medicine and osteopathic manipulative treatment, Dr. Andersen comes to MRPG from Southcoast Physicians Group and Sturdy Memorial, where he cared for patients in an urgent care environment.

After receiving his undergraduate degree from Holy Cross, Dr. Andersen earned his doctor of osteopathy from West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine and completed his residency in Family Medicine at Kent County Hospital in Rhode Island.

The staff at Family Medicine Associates is truly committed to providing high quality health care to patients, from birth to older years, in a warm and compassionate environment.



Jonathan Andersen, DO

For an appointment with Dr. Andersen, please call Family Medicine Associates at 508-533-7161

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Family Medicine Associates

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# Tri-County Students Participate in CyberPatriot Competition

CyberPatriot is the National Youth Cyber Education Program created by the Air Force Association to inspire K-12 students toward careers in cybersecurity or other science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines critical to our nation's future. At the core of the program is the National Youth Cyber Defense Competition, the nation's largest cyber defense competition, that puts high school and middle school students in charge of securing virtual networks.

A total of 4,081 teams registered for this year's competition. Teams from the United States, Canada, and the Department of Defense Dependents schools abroad are eligible to participate

in CyberPatriot's core program, the National Youth Cyber Defense Competition. The National Youth Cyber Education Program challenges teams of high school and middle school students to find and fix cybersecurity vulnerabilities in virtual operating systems. Using a proprietary competition system, teams are scored on how secure they make the system.

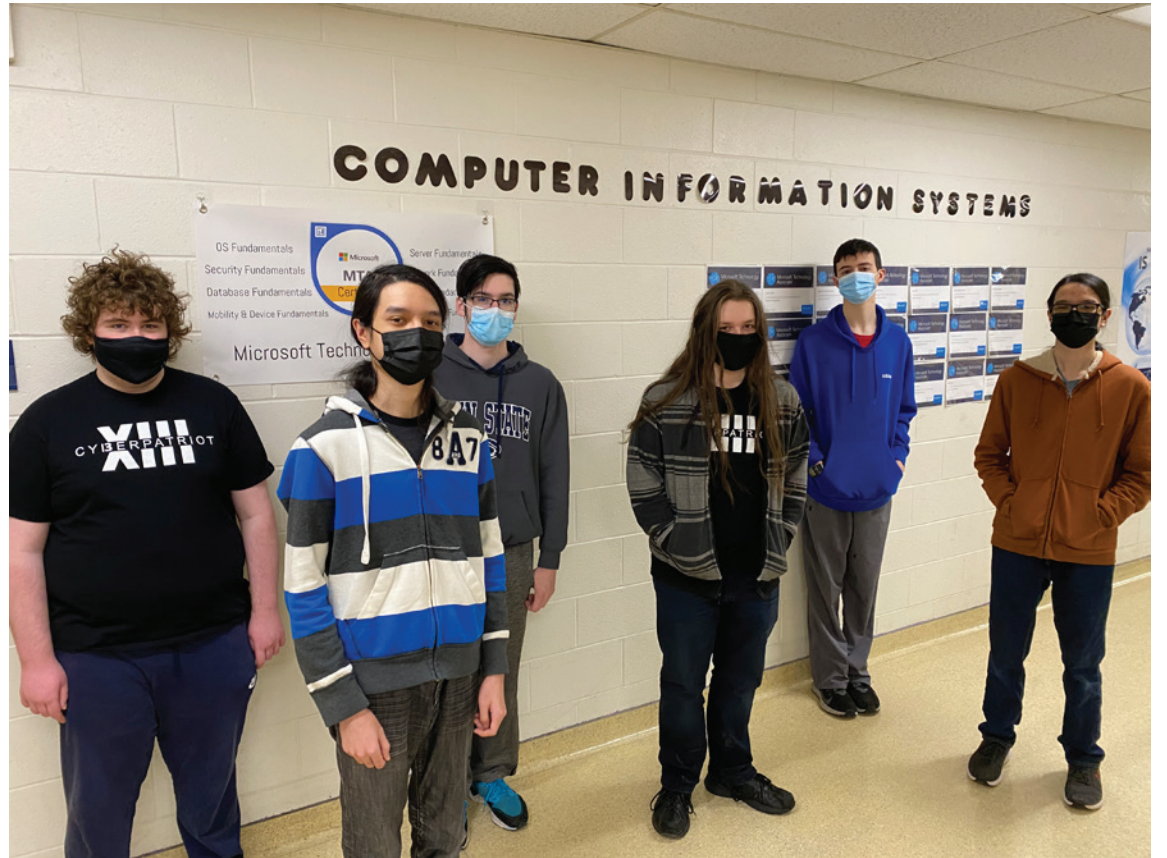
Four teams of six students represented Tri-County in this year's competition. Aiden Mai of Franklin, Kenjiro Mai of Franklin, Alex Comeau of Plainville, Callaghan Killian of North Attleboro, Zachary Belvin of North Attleboro, and Tyler Morrison of Franklin placed first in the Gold Division for Massachusetts.

The second team of Ryan Leber of North Attleboro, Jason Conti of Walpole, Christopher Zajac of Franklin, Christopher Virkaitis of North Attleboro, Gabriel Corey of Franklin, and

Joshua Bellunduno of Franklin placed third in Massachusetts for the Platinum Division.

All teams worked hard; there were three rounds of competition. The State round being the

one we participated in in January. At *Local Town Pages'* press time, Virtual National Finals were scheduled for March 19-21, 2021.



Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical High School students Aiden Mai of Franklin, Kenjiro Mai of Franklin, Alex Comeau of Plainville, Callaghan Killian of North Attleboro, Zachary Belvin of North Attleboro, and Tyler Morrison of Franklin placed first in the Gold Division for Massachusetts recently placed first in the Massachusetts Gold Division of the National Youth Cyber Defense Competition.

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Also, The Town of Franklin has partnered with the Great American Rain Barrel Company (<https://www.greatamericanrainbarrel.com/community/>) to offer barrels to our community. The Town of Franklin is offering a \$50 water conservation rebate for qualifying barrels.

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# Calendar

## April 1

Take and Make Craft: Sashiko, presented by Franklin Mill Store and Franklin Public Library. Kits available to first 50 Franklin residents to register, and will be placed in Curbside Pickup starting April 1st. To register, please contact Assistant Library Director Kim Shipala at (508) 520-4941, or email [kshipala@minlib.net](mailto:kshipala@minlib.net).

## April 4

Easter Egg Hunt, 9 a.m., St. John's Episcopal Church, 237 Pleasant Street, Franklin, followed by Drive-in Service of Resurrection at 10 a.m.

## April 6

Indoor Seed Starting with Blackstone Valley Veggies Gardens, Franklin Public Library virtual program, 7 p.m. To register, <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84483344833>.

## April 7

Franklin Art Association Zoom Meeting, 6:30 p.m., features Marjorie Sardella on "Approach to Photography," visit [www.franklinart.org](http://www.franklinart.org) or find Franklin Art Association on Facebook

## April 10

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

## April 13

DIY Kombucha with the Grounded Goodwife, Franklin Public Library virtual program, 7 p.m.

Learn how to make your own kombucha and the importance of adding fermented food to your diet. For more information, please visit <https://groundedgoodwife.com/>. To register, please email Assistant Library Director Kim Shipala for the Zoom link.

## April 14

Making Movies – The Craft, The Secrets, The Fun with Tom Capps, Phil Russell, and Janelle Tedesco, Wednesday, Franklin Public Library virtual program, 7 p.m.

Filmmakers Tom Capps, Phil Russell and Janelle Tedesco will pull back the curtain to reveal some tricks and secrets behind how movies are made. To register, <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84483344833>.

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\*Not valid on trip or diagnostic fees. This offer expires April 30, 2021. Offer code OT-A-50

## April 16

THE BLACK BOX presents Disney Stars of Broadway, including Broadway's original "Mary Poppins" Ashley Brown, current "Genie" Michael James Scott, and original "Tarzan" Josh Strickland, live outdoor concert under tent at BLACK BOX parking lot, [www.THEBLACKBOXonline.com](http://www.THEBLACKBOXonline.com) or call the box office at (508) 528-3370.

## April 20

SAFE Coalition Community Meeting, 7 p.m., Zoom meeting 475 282 4122

## April 21

"Shady Characters," Plants for Shady Spots, 7 p.m., Virtual presentation by Joann Vierra, co-sponsored by Norfolk and

Millis Garden Clubs, more info. at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090b4daca92fabf94-shady>

## April 24

Celebrate Earth Day Annual Franklin Cleanup, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m., meet at Beaver Pond parking lot, sign up online at <https://franklinrecreation.activityreg.com>. Click "Register for Activities" and then find "Earth Day" on the menu. T-shirts and saplings to first 100 volunteers. Children-friendly sites available.

## April 27

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

Franklin Public Library Book Club, 7 p.m., *The Overstory*, by Richard Powers

To reserve a copy of the book or for more information, please contact Kim Shipala at [kshipala@minlib.net](mailto:kshipala@minlib.net). To register, <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84483344833>.

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# Dean College to Offer Paramedic Training Program

Dean College, in partnership with Emergency Medical Teaching Services Inc., will offer a paramedic education program beginning May 17, 2021.

The program includes clinical and field rotations, as well as credit-bearing evening classes that prepare competent entry-level paramedics in the cognitive, psychomotor and affective learning domains.

Upon completion of the program, students will receive a certificate of completion that allows them to become eligible to sit for the National Registry Paramedic Examination.

Dean will be holding a FREE virtual information session on May 4, 2021 from 6 – 7 p.m. To register for the information session and for more information about the program and requirements, visit [www.dean.edu/paramedictraining](http://www.dean.edu/paramedictraining).

# EMASS Senior Softball League Opens Registration for 2021 Season

Eastern Massachusetts Senior Softball (EMASS) is opening its annual registration campaign for slow-pitch softball players age 50 and over. With over 400 members, the league attracts players from towns across Eastern Massachusetts with games played on fields in Wayland, Medfield, Ashland and Framingham. The EMASS season opens in May with 18 weeks of regular season games scheduled through Labor Day and year-end playoffs completed in early October.

“We played ball safely in 2020 and we will do it again in 2021,” said Walker Royce, Commissioner of EMASS. “Our players will do whatever it takes to get out on the field with their teammates and we will adjust the COVID protocols we used successfully last year to ensure the safety

of our members in the 2021 season.”

After COVID-19 delayed last year’s season opening until July, EMASS salvaged a welcome half-season in its Saturday divisions and delivered a full 36-game season in the weekday divisions by playing twice a week. With facial coverings, social distancing and other common sense guidelines, EMASS played throughout the summer and fall of 2020 without any member testing positive.

## About EMASS Senior Softball League

EMASS was founded in 1995 and offers over 400 seniors of all skill levels a safe, well-organized opportunity to play competitive slow-pitch softball. EMASS members range in age from 50 to 90. Skill levels range from casual

recreational players to those who play on nationally competitive tournament teams. Players of any skill level will find a spot with teams of similar abilities in one or more of EMASS’s five divisions. The American division (average age 60) and National division (average age 67) play doubleheaders on Saturday mornings. The weekday divisions play once-a-week doubleheaders on different days with the Pacific (average age 64) on Mondays, the Metro (average age 75) on Tuesdays, and the Atlantic (average age 69) on Thursdays. Many members play on different teams in multiple divisions.

For more information about EMASS Senior Softball League, visit [www.emass.org](http://www.emass.org).

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# Sports

## Versatile Fitzgibbons Eager for Return with Franklin Nine

By KEN HAMWEY,  
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Jake Fitzgibbons missed an opportunity to build on a top-notch sophomore season of baseball when the coronavirus forced state officials to cancel all spring sports last year.

Batting eighth in the lineup, all the Franklin native did was hit .300, compile an on-base percentage of .425 and drive in seven runs. A smooth fielder at second base, he managed to get two starts on the mound and finished with a 2-0 record, a 3.50 E.R.A. and 10 strikeouts in 14 innings.

Fitzgibbons definitely played a role in helping the Panthers post a 21-1 record in 2019 and qualify for the Super-8 Tournament.

Now, the 18-year-old Franklin High senior, who can play five positions, is eager to continue with a sport he's enjoyed since he was six. His emotions today are very different than they were last spring.

"When all sports were canceled last spring, I was angry and disappointed," Fitzgibbons said. "I felt cheated losing my junior season. But, it's an exciting time now. Baseball is about to start, and I can't wait for the opener."

Fitzgibbons is acutely aware there'll be modifications, like wearing masks, distancing and applying hand sanitizer. But, he's prepared for whatever is required. "Baseball is a sport that involves adjusting, so I'll deal with whatever changes are necessary. What's important is that health and safety come first for everyone. But, if we can play and also deal safely with the virus, then that's an acceptable option."

Coach Zach Brown had plenty of options finding a varsity role for Fitzgibbons. The 5-foot-11, 180-pounder is a remarkably versatile athlete. He can pitch, catch, play shortstop, second and third base. Maybe that's why the University of Hartford moved quickly in offering Fitzgibbons a scholarship. He verbally commit-



ted to Hartford at the start of his junior year.

Hartford's coach, Justin Blood, hasn't guaranteed Fitzgibbons playing time, but he does like his versatile nature.

"Coach Blood said he liked my swing," Fitzgibbons said. "He said that I also could play in the outfield, infield or at catcher. I'm honored to receive a scholarship. Playing college ball was a goal I set in seventh grade. The scholarship puts me in a good spot and gives me an opportunity"

Fitzgibbons isn't sure where he'll play this season for the Panthers, but Brown is leaning towards catcher or shortstop. "Jake will play wherever he makes us stronger," Brown said. "He's never overwhelmed, and the game comes to him naturally. He's athletic, skilled and has a high baseball IQ. If we use him to catch, his strong arm and his ability to block the plate and call a strong game will be big assets."

Fitzgibbons does have a preference. "Catching is my favorite position," he said. "It's like being a quarterback, calling the plays and the pitches. I like encouraging our pitchers and settling them down, if needed."

When hitting, the left-handed Fitzgibbons is aggressive, quick to jump on a first pitch. "The key is timing and anticipating what kind of pitch is coming," he noted. When pitching, the right-hander works fast, aims for pinpoint control, strives to stay ahead in the count and relies on a fastball (80 mph), curve change-up and slider. In the infield, especially at shortstop, he's all about being mentally focused. "A strong



Excited at the start of the baseball season after this quiet year, Franklin High senior Jake Fitzgibbons will head to the University of Hartford this fall.

arm and good range are the keys to getting to a ball in the hole or up the middle," he said.

Fitzgibbons is optimistic that when Franklin's season gets underway, the Panthers will have quality talent that features promising pitching and hitting.

"Our team will be younger than usual and we'll have some inexperience, but it'll be a hard-working group," he said. "We can make a run at whatever kind of post-season there might be and I hope everyone enjoys playing. It's a time to enjoy the journey after being deprived of it last spring. Mansfield and North Attleboro will likely be strong opponents."

Relying on a competitive philosophy of winning, reaching his potential and having fun, A good student, Fitzgibbons, who'll be playing his third year for the Franklin Legion this summer, is undecided on his major at the University of Hartford, but he's considering physical therapy or sports management. As for baseball, he's fully aware that the transition from Franklin High to Division 1 Hartford will be smooth, only if he works hard.

"I'll be prepared because at Franklin, our practices are like college ball," he said. "There's no doubt that the college game will be faster and all the players will be talented, probably all former high school all-stars. But, a strong work ethic should ensure a good transition."

Brown is convinced Fitzgibbons will succeed because "Jake is a baseball junkie whose versatility will help him."

Two attributes that should lead to a formula for achievement.

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# A Spring Arts Awakening for THE BLACK BOX



THE BLACK BOX, Franklin's very own concert, theater, and event venue, will host nine weeks of entertainment, outdoors under a tent in the venue's parking lot. The Spring Arts Awakening celebrates a comeback for arts and entertainment and offers an opportunity to support THE BLACK BOX in its recovery from the pandemic. Spring Arts Awakening at THE BLACK BOX kicks off

on April 16 with a concert by three Disney Stars of Broadway: Broadway's original "Mary Poppins" Ashley Brown, current "Genie" Michael James Scott, and original "Tarzan" Josh Strickland. The trio will perform an evening of Disney favorites. There will be limited seating for this special evening out in Franklin. The Spring Arts Awakening lineup will also include local band

The Peacheaters, Blues legend James Montgomery, viral a cappella sensation T.3, international touring ensemble Electric Youth, cabaret performances featuring Broadway stars, a June Pride Month concert benefiting The Trevor Project, FPAC's annual Culinary Cabaret, and more. "The Spring Arts Awakening provides an opportunity to welcome our audiences back to THE BLACK BOX," notes

TBB and Franklin Performing Arts Company Director Raye Lynn Mercer. "The safety of an outdoor venue provides patrons a comfortable transition to performances and event gatherings." Mercer adds, "Reopening guidelines will be followed and all

safety protocols will be in place." Patrons are encouraged to visit [www.THEBLACKBOX-online.com](http://www.THEBLACKBOX-online.com) and follow THE BLACK BOX on social media to stay updated on the venue's offerings.

## Franklin Senior Center Events in April

The Franklin Senior Center is planning an Earth Day Presentation with Q&A via Zoom on Thursday, April 22nd. In addition to our Curbside Cafe and regularly scheduled programs, we will host a Talk Franklin Matters Zoom Senior Coffee Hour with State and Local Officials via Zoom and Name that Tune on April 15th at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom. There will also be an opportunity to pick up a painting kit to work at home, or in person at the senior center. For more details, check out the April edition of the Senior Connection newsletter, <https://www.franklinma.gov/franklin-senior-center/pages/connection-newsletter>.

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# Real Estate Corner

## ERA Key Realty Services – Growth in the Midst of a Pandemic

### Franklin Office Relocates to 456 West Central Street

In the rapidly changing real-estate industry, there’s always a new norm, a new system and a new approach to serving clients. ERA Key Realty Services stays on top of these changes, enabling its agents to fully cater to their clients.

“Our agents are in this business, because of the satisfaction they get helping clients achieve their home-buying and home-selling goals,” says Regional Vice President Jeff Taylor. ERA Key recently moved its Franklin office to 456 West Central Street.

Taylor’s father, Bruce, started the business in Milford as a Help-U-Sell franchise in 1987. That single operation grew to another

in Franklin, then another in Whitinsville. In the 1990s, the company became an ERA franchise, later merging ERA Homeowners Advantage with ERA John Nelson, and in 2018 merged with HUNT Real Estate ERA in upstate New York. ERA Key has grown to 14 offices in Massachusetts, and the agency holds licenses in New Hampshire, Connecticut and Rhode Island.

“Our focus is to make sure we continue to embrace our family culture, staying on top of innovation and industry needs, while providing the assistance our professionals desire,” says President and COO Cheryl Eidinger-Taylor.

## Business spotlight

lor.

That culture begins with support. Buyers entering today’s competitive real-estate market need sharp, savvy agents armed with the latest technology and strong administrative backing.

“We are very focused on ensuring that our agents are the most educated within the industry – fully informed about not only legal issues, but about what’s going on in the marketplace,” says Jeff Taylor. “Our sales team is dedicated to providing solid advice, excellent service and outstanding results. Their goal is to



## Key Realty SERVICES

always act in the best interest of their clients.”

For sellers, he says, that means helping prepare the home to stand out and sell quickly, for the highest price and with the best terms. For buyers, agents know the options and techniques available to make their offer stand out and secure the winning bid.

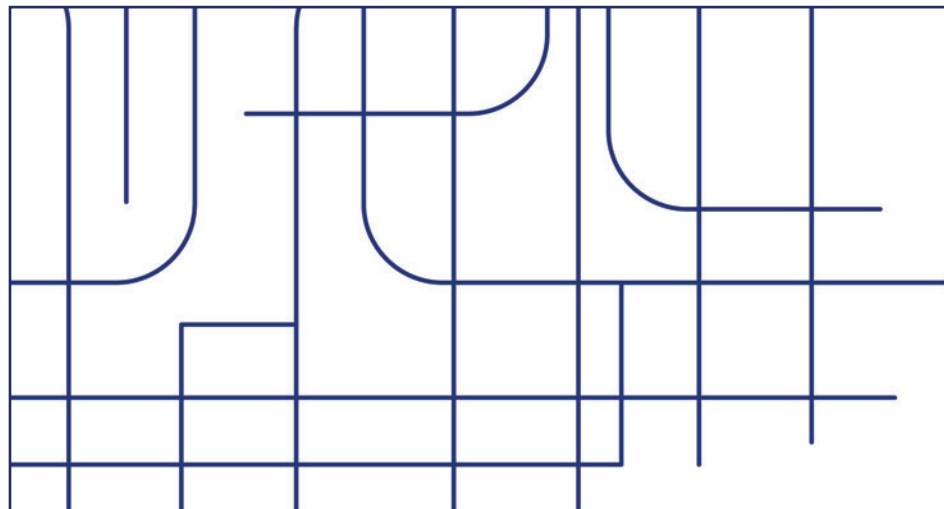
In addition to individual branch administrators and sales managers, ERA Key retains a support person for every eight agents. Agents can rely on staff

for services such as accounting, IT, e-commerce, relocation, facilities and marketing.

“Agents don’t have to spend their time on the behind-the-scenes work, such as documentation or marketing, and they don’t have to worry about their systems going down. They can be face-to-face with their clients,” says Taylor.

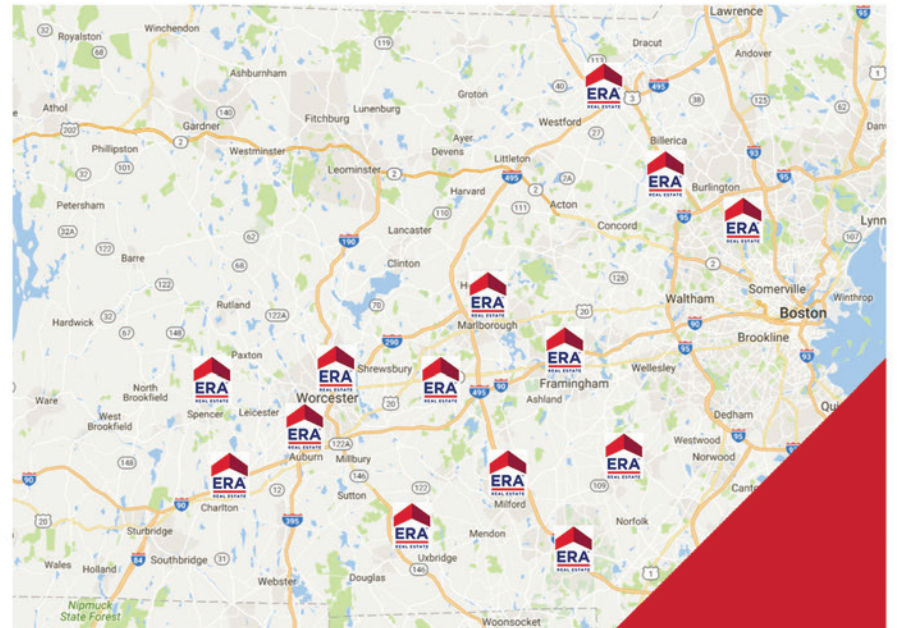
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*continued on page 20*



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### ERA

*continued from page 19*

During this past year's lockdown, for example, ERA Key's IT department seamlessly implemented Deposit Link, a paperless app for consumers and agents to send and accept deposits.

ERA Key's 350+ agents can also turn to members of their senior team, who are always available.

"The ownership team is in the business daily," says Taylor. "Those on the leadership team are not just names on a roster."

Live training and morale-boosting events, in traditional years, create camaraderie between branches.

Even ERA Key Realty's new Franklin site, a contemporary open work environment, fosters that friendly team atmosphere. While other firms are minimizing their office locations during the pandemic, Taylor says his firm is improving and expanding its physical locations.

ERA Key branches also volunteer as teams for local community projects and give back through a company charitable trust.

"When our agents have a closing with a client, they can elect to have a portion of their commission donated to the charitable trust," says Taylor. "Money is held in the trust for their branch, and branch members vote on where it goes in the local community."

ERA Key Realty Services Charitable Trust has donated more than \$435,000 since it was established in 2004 – more than \$32,000 last year alone – to dozens of Massachusetts charities.

That level of professionalism and community commitment explains why ERA Key enjoys a repeat customer average of 68%, compared to 14% nationally in its industry. "Our agents are staying connected with their clients long after the transaction is complete," says Taylor.

2020 was ERA Key Realty's best year ever. The firm sold 2,140 homes, with \$813 million in sales volume. Including its New York division, that number increases to 13,195 homes and \$3.3 billion in sales. That makes ERA Key the 35th largest real-estate agency nationwide.

ERA Key Realty Services is located at 456 West Central Street in Franklin. You can reach them at (866) 437-2539 or online at [KeyRealtyServices.com](http://KeyRealtyServices.com).



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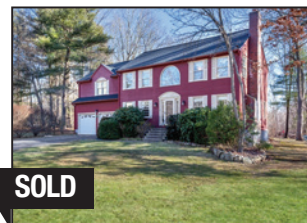
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