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April 2021

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Inside Pages



Family Promise Responds to Natick Residents in Need

By CYNTHIA WHITTY

The pandemic has not been easy for many, especially those residents who are unemployed or under employed. A new report (Jan. 11, 2021, Economic Roundtable; Locked-Out: Unemployment and Homelessness in the Covid Economy) says that COVID-driven loss of jobs and employment income will cause the number of homeless workers to increase each year through 2023. Without large-scale,

government employment programs, the report says, the Pandemic Recession is projected to cause twice as much homelessness as the 2008 Great Recession.

Family Promise Metrowest (FPM) knows first-hand the impact of the pandemic on Natick families.

In 2020 FPM served 50 families, including 89 children. These families faced an immediate housing crisis, homelessness or eviction, or were transitioning from the FPM shelter pro-

gram back into community housing. Seventy-six percent were families who were headed by a single mom; 16 percent, by a two-parent family; and 8 percent, by a single dad.

In 2021, FPM anticipates serving at least 50 families or more.

"This past year posed unique problems for our families, given the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic," Executive Director Susan

PROMISE
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These Routes Were Made for Walking

By SEAN SULLIVAN

In a fitting capstone to an extraordinary year, Natick will honor Earth Day like in the days of old – in person.

The town will be hosting Natick Trails Summit, a virtual event that seeks to publicize and promote local pathways and bucolic byways. It will be a virtual ribbon-cutting ceremony of sorts, as stakeholders gather to discuss and educate attendees about the town's plans for these outdoor spaces.

EARTH DAY
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PROMISE

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Crossley said. “Normally relying on a network of congregations and volunteers to provide safe

“In addition to the isolation measures,” Crossley said, “we also mobilized to ensure nutritional and medical needs were met for our families across the region. Within the first few weeks

and ran donation drives for medical and cleaning supplies, which we distributed to families.”

FPM has 12 staff members; seven full-time and five part-time. “Typically, approximately 1,300 volunteers per year contribute their time to our organization and families, although during Covid shutdowns, we have not been able to offer hands-on volunteering opportunities,” Crossley said.

The services FPM offers include:

The Shelter Program, which provides safe housing, meals, and a supportive environment to help families experiencing homelessness develop life skills essential for achieving stability.

The SAIL Program (Sustaining Achievements for Independent Living) that supports families in successfully reestablishing housing in the community. Through this program,



housing for our families, we instead moved families into individual hotel rooms where they could safely isolate, thereby protecting themselves and our network of volunteers from potential disease transmission.”

of the pandemic, 72 percent of our families lost their jobs or had work hours reduced. This loss of income severely impacted household budgets for food and health-care expenses. We supplemented SNAP benefits and food pantry donations with grocery gift cards,

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Family Promise Metrowest’s development director, Carole Brodrick, says there are many fun ways to help support Natick families. Some of FPM’s upcoming events are listed below. For more information on events, visit www.familypromisemetrowest.org/news-events/events.

Walk for Change: May 1 and 2 (Registration opens March 15). Register, raise funds, have fun, walk the route of your choice. On May 1 and 2, FPM is creating an event in which individuals, families, or small groups of friends will walk together in their home towns to raise funds and awareness for families facing homelessness. These walks will take place across the 10 Metrowest towns in which FPM has a presence. The walk will also feature several mini-events or activities leading up to and on the day of the walk, bringing the FPM community together virtually in support and celebration.

FUNDrive, Monday, April 19, 10 a.m. Clean your closets for a cause! Bring your items to the truck at 6 Mulligan St., Natick. FPM will start loading the truck at 10 am with your donations, and will continue to accept bags until the truck is full. FPM will receive a donation from Savers based on the number of pounds of soft goods collected.

Raffle for Change: Purchase tickets by midnight, **Saturday, May 1.** Winners will be announced on **Sunday, May 2, 1 pm.** First prize: \$2,500; second prize: “Refresh Your Room” prize package; third prize: “Rejuvenate Your Garden” prize package.



Family Promise Metrowest: Residents walk to support families in need. (Photo/supplied)

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**MLS PIN 1/1/17 - 12/31/2020

EARTH DAY

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The summit dovetails nicely with Earth Day (April 22), and the warming weather that often arrives during those upcoming weeks. Natick’s usually vibrant and well-attended Earth Day festivities will remain in hibernation for the second consecutive year this month, the town erring on the side of caution during a pandemic still proving its potency.

Paved pathways will also have a starring role in the summit, as Natick’s much-anticipated stretch of the Cochituate Rail Trail becomes more integrated with neighboring towns.

As we’re not out of the woods yet in terms of moving past the pandemic, this summit will assume the form of the ubiquitous Zoom meeting. Any interested party may participate in the event by visiting tinyurl.com/2021naticktrails to RSVP and receive a link to the summit. The event will be held on Saturday morning, April , from 10 am and noon.

The online meeting is both an effort to inform the public about these open spaces, and to connect

Natick Trail Steward Program

Program Overview

The intent of the Steward program is to ensure that the Town trails system is maintained in a manner that allows residents to enjoy these natural assets. Too often trash, downed limbs, erosion, or other obstructions can take away from that experience. The Stewards will be the eyes and ears of Natick’s Trails and Forest Stewardship committee.

Time Commitment

We ask that each steward walk their assigned trail at least twice a month (Spring through early Winter), and after any large storms, to ensure the trail is in good condition.

Responsibilities

1

GET ON THE TRAIL.

Plan to walk your trail at least twice a month

2

FIX WHAT YOU CAN

Pick up trash, clear the trail, cut back branches

3

TELL US WHAT YOU SAW

Document your assessment and get help if needed

Trails Up For Adoption (see map for location)

1.) Cochituate Aqueduct	8.) Pegan Cove
2.) Coolidge Hill	9.) Pickerel Pond North
3.) Eisenmenger Trail (north)	10.) Pickerel Pond South
4.) Eisenmenger Trail (south)	11.) Takawampait Trail
5.) Henry Wilson Trail	12.) Timothy Coolidge Hill
6.) Moses Pond	13.) Town Forest (west)
7.) Middlesex Path	14.) Town Forest (east)

Interested? Send an email to naticktrails@gmail.com to express interest and if you have a trail preference.

Town of Natick
Open Spaces & Trails



Prohibited Activities



No Chainsaws
without prior approval



No Trail Blazing

the diverse array of stakeholders who can have an impact and input on these related projects. The Natick Trails Summit will

include the new Trails and Forest Stewardship Committee, the Cochituate Rail Trail Advisory Committee, Friends of Natick

Trails, Keep Natick Beautiful, and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council among others.

Marianne Iarossi is an Open Space Planner & Conservation Agent for the town, and will kick off the virtual summit.

“It should be chock full of basically trail information,” she said. “Anybody who has a trail interest, we’re encouraging to sign up.”

The town’s trails and forests had already been an often-overlooked resource during the past few years, and the recent renewed emphasis on outdoor lifestyles has brought these venues back into sharp focus.

“Because of Covid, there’s a lot more people using the trails,” said Doug Drenik.

He is a member of Natick’s new Trails and Forest Stewardship Committee, and spoke with anticipation about everything trail-related in the town. The committee is under the umbrella of the town’s conservation commission, and its creation is an effort to reclaim an ownership, pride and upkeep of those trails and woodlands. Before it came into being, care of the trails was mostly an ad-hoc affair.

“No one knew who was responsible for the trails,” he said.

Now, Drenik is part of a committee whose mandate is to oversee them, a diverse team that includes a botanist, marketing talent, and other varied spheres of expertise.

At the top of the team’s list is trail signage, with the goal of making walking in the woods more user-friendly.

“The last thing we want is for people to go walking and get lost,” said Drenik.

With Hunnewell Forest’s 100 acres, hills, and winding array of paths, getting lost can be easy for the uninitiated hiker. In addition to the planned signage, kiosks located at trail heads have been targeted for makeovers and maintenance. That effort includes updated maps that will be monitored and replenished, and an app that will aid hikers in their travels.

“Coming this spring,” he said, “the town will start to see a lot of these efforts.”

Perhaps most exciting of the upgrades will be a new corps of trail volunteers. These locals will agree to walk specific trails at least

EARTH DAY
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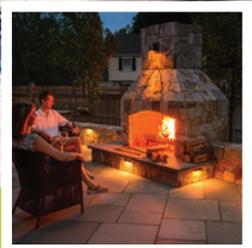
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PROMISE*continued from page 2*

families who graduate from the Shelter program and move back into apartments are provided case management for another one to two years along with subsidies to support rent or address debt.

The LIFE Program (Local Initiative for Family Empowerment), a homelessness prevention program that supports families who are at risk of eviction but not yet homeless. This program offers subsidies to pay rent in arrears and one year of case management.

The Steps to Success Program, which assists adults and teens in FPM housing programs in breaking the cycle of poverty by providing comprehensive supports to advance their education or career development and maximize their earning potential.

FPM is located at 6 Mulligan Street, Natick. Residents may make donations through the website, www.familypromisemetrowest.org/donate.

Natick's Art in Bloom Brightens Downtown in April

By CYNTHIA WHITTY

Natick's Art in Bloom, floral arrangements inspired by public art, will be held downtown for the public to enjoy from 12 to 4 p.m., Saturday, April 17 (rain date: April 18). The event is sponsored by the Natick Center Cultural



District (NCCD) and the Natick Garden Club.

"NCCD and the Natick Garden Club have been working together to beautify our town for two decades," Elizabeth Carroll, garden club member and coordinator of Natick's Art in Bloom, said.

For the event Natick Garden Club members will design floral arrangements inspired by downtown Natick's public art, like The Unconventional Garden, Wings of the Butterfly, various electrical boxes, the bus stop mural, and mosaics.



Photos/Natick Center Cultural District

The event will take place on Adams and Court streets. Visitors will walk through and view the works of art with the corresponding floral arrangements. Other works of art that are not in the immediate area will be photographed and the photos will be set on tables next to arrangements.

"Working off of the existing public art was a perfect fit for us," Carroll explained. "We [garden club members] spend a lot of time in Natick Center, planting and caring for about 50 planters in all four seasons. Having the opportunity to interpret the various murals, mosaics, and public art projects through floral design is exciting. Flowers and art are a great combination. We hope Natick Art in Bloom is the beginning of a new tradition."

The Natick Garden Club will also have an information table

and some sidewalk sale items available, such as wildflower seed packets, DIY sunflower seed pots, and notecards.

NCCD Executive Director Athena Pandolf said, "We are thrilled to be able to partner with the Natick Garden Club on this event and to shed light on this fantastic group that provides beauty each season to the Natick Center downtown businesses and town. Their work adds joy and brilliance during a time when we need it most!"

Natick's Art in Bloom will coincide with the Natick Center Sidewalk Sale.

All pandemic protocols (masks, social distancing) will be in place for the outdoor event. For more information, visit the Natick Garden Club at www.natickgardenclub.org or NCCD at www.natickcenter.org.

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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, 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.



Glenn Brown

their planning and investing, so they can balance kids, aging parents and financial independence.

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

EARTH DAY

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twice monthly, collecting trash and tidying up as they go. They will also report to the committee any larger issues that need tending to, such as fallen trees.

"Frankly, I've been overwhelmed with the response," said Drenik, after the call for volunteers went out. Thirty locals have signed up, which he said is about 3 per trail.

"There seems to be a lot of energy around people getting involved."

the large meadow in the forest's southeast section. The meadow is in a valley of sorts, hemmed in on three sides by wooded hills, and has resisted (as nature will) efforts to tame it.

The town now seeks to cultivate a wildflower sanctuary in the meadow, and a local Eagle Scout group has been recruited to help in that project. Iarossi said she hopes to see that project come to fruition for this

spring and summer. "We're trying to keep it as natural as possible," she said.



Having such a diverse team on the committee will be key for the implementation of certain projects, such as the restoration of



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April 2021 (Virtual) Events At The Natick Historical Society

A Revolution in the News

Joseph M. Adelman
Co-hosted by the Natick Historical Society, the Sherborn Historical Society, and the Sherborn Library

April 13, 2021
7:00 pm
On Zoom

Author Joseph M. Adelman will tell the story of the political lives of the American Revolution's forgotten instigators: newspaper and broadside printers, who were instrumental in creating propaganda and rallying the public to the Revolutionary cause.

Professor Adelman is a historian of media, communication, and politics in the Atlantic world and the author of *Revolutionary Networks: The Business and Politics of Printing the News, 1763-1789* (2019).



Professor Joseph M. Adelman; event graphic

This event, which is co-hosted by the Natick Historical Society, the Sherborn Historical Society, and the Sherborn Library, will be held via Zoom.

This event is FREE and open to the public, but advance registration is required. Register at <https://www.natickhistorical-society.org/events>

Meet Our Neighbors: Natick Soldier Systems Center

Hosted by the Natick Historical Society

April 28, 2021
7:00 pm
On Zoom

The Natick Historical Society's Meet Our Neighbors series shines a light on the many cultural, educational, service, and other organizations that have shaped Natick over time.

In April, we'll hear from Col. Frank Moore of the Natick Soldier Systems Center (NSSC). Join

us to learn about the history of the NSSC (popularly known as the Natick Army Labs), its role in our community since its opening in 1954, and what we can expect from them in 2021.

This event will be held via Zoom.

This event is FREE and open to the public, but advance registration is required. Register at

<https://www.natickhistorical-society.org/events>



Event graphic

Empowering BIPOC students

How Educators Can Support and Empower BIPOC Students

Thursday, April 15 at 4pm via Zoom

For educators of students of all ages

Psychologist, author, and acclaimed speaker Dr. Briscoe-Smith will present on how to create a school environment that promotes pride and affirms the

identity of BIPOC students. Dr. Briscoe-Smith will also offer resources for engaging in conversation, addressing trauma and connecting with families of color. Simultaneous ASL and Spanish Language Interpretation will be provided at this event.

How BIPOC Families Can Support Themselves and Their Children

Thursday, April 15 Wednesday, December 2 at 7pm via Zoom

For BIPOC parents, caregivers and families (all ages)

Psychologist, author and acclaimed speaker Dr. Allison Briscoe-Smith will present on how parents can support themselves and nurture and empower their BIPOC children amidst rac-

ism, racial violence and trauma. Dr. Briscoe-Smith will offer tools, strategies and frameworks to assist parents/caregivers in listening to their children and promoting their emotional health, resilience, empowerment and self care. Finally, in the midst of the pandemic, Dr. Briscoe-Smith will speak about how BIPOC families can offer themselves and their children grace amidst these times that are challenging on many levels. Simultaneous ASL and Spanish Language Interpretation will be provided at this event.

Visit www.SPARKKindness.org for more information and to register for these programs and to learn more about SPARK Kindness.



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Library news

Due to rising cases of COVID-19 within our Community and the surrounding areas, the Library and Board of Health have decided to scale back service and close for in-person browsing. We are very excited to announce a new point of service that will allow you to get your holds without an appointment, with our brand new, Walk-up Window!

Walk-Up Window for Holds Pickup

What is the Walk-up Window? The Walk-up Window allows you to pick up your holds with no appointment necessary! Come to the library and line up outside along the ramp, where you will be protected from the elements with our exciting new Holiday Window Display. This exciting initiative will give you the flexibility to pick up your items on your time, with expanded hours during the week and on weekends.

If you have holds to pickup, please use the Walk-up Window! This window is located in our interior entryway.

- One person may enter at a time

- Please enter at the bottom of the ramp, and wait on the marked spots to keep physically distant
- An exterior light indicator will go from red to green when it is your turn to enter the Walk-up Window.
- Scan your library card once inside, and we will grab your items for you!
- Don't have anything on hold? Give us a call at 508-647-6520 and we will assist you! Or head to "my account" and browse our catalog!

Walk-Up Window Hours

Monday – Thursday : 9am-8pm
 Friday & Saturday : 9am-4:30pm
 Sunday : 1pm-4:30pm

Can I still do Contactless Holds Pick Up?

Yes! We encourage everyone who cannot stand outside or may not want to wait because of children or pets in their car to still book an appointment online or via the Minuteman Library App.



Contactless Pickup

We will still have contactless pickup appointments available for your convenience and safety.

- Pickup appointments are available from 9am-10am daily from Monday through Friday, and 9am-10am on Saturday. We also have appointments from 7pm-8pm Monday through Thursday.
- You may only book a pickup appointment AFTER receiving a request pickup notice from the Library that your items are ready.
- If you miss your appointment, please call us to schedule another. Because we only have so many slots per appointment, we are unable to reschedule pickup for the same day.
- Puzzles and items from the "Library of Things" are not available during contactless pickup.

How does it work?

- Step 1: Put items on hold using your Minuteman account
- Step 2: Wait for an email, text, or phone call that your items are ready to be picked up.
- Step 3: Book a pickup appointment window using our online pickup calendar OR give us a call at 508-647-6520
- Step 4: Come to the Contactless Pickup area outside the library during your appointment window and grab your items off the contactless pickup shelf. Items will be checked out and bagged with your name on it.

Can I Browse Books?

Not at this time. However, staff are hard at work making solutions to give you browse-ability while we are closed. If you would like a recommendation give us a call 508-647-6520 or join Morse Book Match!

Delivery Service

Delivery Service is available for our patrons who cannot safely come to the library, to see if you qualify for delivery click here.

What Stays Virtual

- All programming and events will continue to be hosted online.
- Reference assistance by email, chat, text message, appointment, or phone through our Digital Branch
- Virtual Reference hours: Monday-Friday 9am-6pm, Saturday 10am-2pm
- Access to all the great digital content like e-Books, e-Audiobooks, movies, magazines, and music from MorseInstitute.org website and our Virtual Reading Room
- Remote access to research resources like databases

Express bundles

The new Express Bundles for adults, DVD, teens, and children have launched! Also, we have a new Book-Fix program, that is

LIBRARY
continued on page 8




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Morse Institute Library Virtual Programming

Childrens:

Program Videos

Premiering on our Facebook and website, no registration needed!

Rhyme Time

Posted Wednesdays 10:00am short stories, songs and play-time extension activities geared for infants and toddlers and their grownups.

Preschool Play

Posted Fridays 10:00am weekly program of stories, songs and games designed especially for the preschool set.

BedTime Buddies

Posted Wednesday nights 7pm A fun pre-bedtime program full of songs, skits, reading and more! A family program for

younger listeners and the young at heart

Teen and tween:

Dungeons & Dragons Online Gaming

Friday evenings, 6:00-8:00pm Play a Dungeons & Dragons adventure online over 5 weeks! It will be a fifth edition standard fantasy D&D campaign set in Faerun. Players will be able to choose from a variety of pre-generated first level characters. Beginners welcome!

Open to Teens ages 13-18.

Relaxing Coloring

Join us for a coloring session with exclusive coloring sheets - and chat with other Teens & Tweens on Zoom! Hosted by Teen Librarian Robin. If you

want to take the coloring sheets and color on your own time, that's OK, too!

Open to Teens ages 11-18 + 5th graders.

Monthly, from 3:00-4:00pm

Adult Programs:

Meditation with Vivek and Lipi

Wednesdays at 6:30pm Good news for our Wednesday Night Meditation folks! Vivek and Lipi will be hosting Meditation live using Zoom every Wednesday night at 6:30pm! Join us for relaxation and mindfulness! You must register for each session separately using the online calendar above. The Zoom link will be included in your registration confirmation.

Self Care Series: Virtual Qi Gong ("chi" gong)

Every Tuesday at 10am

Join us weekly on Tuesday mornings for some relaxing and low-key Qi Gong. Qi Gong is a centuries-old system of coordinated body-posture and movement, breathing, and meditation used for the purposes of health, spirituality, and martial-arts training. With roots in Chinese medicine, philosophy, and martial arts, Qi Gong is traditionally viewed by the Chinese and throughout Asia as a practice to cultivate and balance qi (pronounced approximately as "chi"), translated as "life energy". The best part about Qi Gong, anyone can do it! Please register for each session you will be attending using our online calendar.

Research & Learning:

Exploring Genealogy & Family History

Every Thursday at 3pm Join Morse Research Librarian Karol to learn about the Library and other online resources you can use to start researching your family history! Stop by with your questions, or if you have started your research, let us know how it's going. This is a great space to share ideas and strategies to help grow your family tree. This program will be held using ZOOM! Registration is required for each session you plan to attend. Please be sure to enter a valid email address as a Zoom room code and link will be sent in the email confirmation.

LIBRARY

continued from page 7

similar to Stitch-Fix (book bundles curated to fit your taste).

You can use the Walk up window to pick up an Express Bundle on demand.

OR, you can fill out an online form to request:

1. Express Bundle(s) to pick up later at the walk up window (within 1 day!)

2. Express Bundle(s) to pick up via contactless holds

3. Book-Fix curated collection based on your preferences within the categories of adult, teen, or children.

Mobile Self-Checkout & Contactless Pickup now LIVE on the Minuteman App!

In order to make getting your materials as fast and safe as possible, we are excited to announce

that you can now book a contactless pickup appointment directly from the Minuteman App available for both Apple IOS & Android devices!

Coming into the building to pickup materials? You now have a contactless option to check out your materials from within the library! Open the Minuteman Library App, select "Mobile Checkout" and scan the item barcodes to checkout. It is simple, fast, and safe!

Special Sunday Holds Pickups!

In order to help those who cannot safely come into the Library, we are opening three hours of Contactless Holds Pickup on Sundays. Times will be available at 1:30, 2:30, & 3:30. Visit the Contactless Holds Pickup webpage for all the information on picking up your holds without coming into the library!

Bacon Free Library Programs

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www.baconfreelibrary.org

Curbside hours:

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday: 10-4
Tuesday: 10-6 and Saturday 10-12

Visit our website to see our full list of book clubs, story times, and special programs for kids and adults, and to register for the Zoom links to these programs.

Tuesday, April 6 @ 7 pm: Planting for Pollinators in New England

<http://baconfreelibrary.org/event/pollinorgarden/>

Weds, April 7 @ 6:30 pm: Toe Jam Virtual Variety Show

<http://baconfreelibrary.org/event/toejam/>

Tuesday, April 13 @ 7pm: Composting: Making Soil from Scraps

<http://baconfreelibrary.org/event/compost/>

Friday, April 16 @ 7 pm: Adult Trivia Night: Pop Culture of the 1980s

<http://baconfreelibrary.org/event/trivia80/>

Weds, April 21 @ 6:30 pm: Elijah T. Grasshopper (music/story program for children)

<http://baconfreelibrary.org/event/grasshopper/>

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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.



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

"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 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 Prom-

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.

ise 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

"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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Vaccinations for our Commonwealth's educators and school staff

Dear Gov. Baker and Secretary Sudders:

We urge you to adopt and implement plans to ensure that all educators and school staff in Massachusetts can receive COVID-19 vaccines prior to reopening elementary and secondary schools to full, in-person learning.

Everyone agrees that it is in the best interest of students to return to classrooms that allow them to interact with their peers, socialize, and receive direct support and instruction from school professionals. The question is: how do we do that safely and in a manner that increases public confidence and trust that our schools are, in fact, safe?

To achieve those goals, please immediately implement three critical actions:

1. Approve the Last Mile plan proposed by the Professional Firefighters of Massachusetts and Mascon Medical to vaccinate our state's educators and school staff. The plan, supported by the orga-



nizations representing our school staff and educators, is the surest path to quick, efficient, and accessible vaccination. In addition, the state should approve other local efforts to vaccinate educators and essential workers close to their workplaces, providing minimal disruption to school services.

2. Adopt a flexible calendar for reopening school districts that reflects the reality that some districts will be ready to reopen faster than

others. The goal should be to reopen as soon as can be done safely and not according to an arbitrary deadline.

3. Provide presumptive approval for waivers submitted to DESE to maintain remote learning. School districts that need to maintain remote learning status should not need to jump through hoops to do so.

Recent approval of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine suggests that the state's supply of vaccines will increase over the coming weeks. Implementing the steps outlined above will ensure that we can take

advantage of increased supply when it arrives while also providing assurance to schools and families that the restart of in-person learning will happen as safely and successfully as possible.

Yours in service,
Senator Becca Rausch,
Norfolk, Bristol and Middlesex
and 54 other

Everyday ways to celebrate Earth Day 2021

Things to do on April 22 or any day to celebrate the Blue Planet

By THERESA KNAPP

This year, we celebrate Earth Day on Thursday, April 22. The now-worldwide event started in 1970 to bring attention to environmental issues.

According to www.earthday.org, it was the idea of then-Senator Gaylord Nelson who, in 1969, witnessed a massive oil spill in Santa Barbara, CA, and "wanted to infuse the energy of student anti-war protests with an emerging public consciousness about air and water pollution." More than 50 years later, Earth Day has mobilized more than one billion people for action every Earth Day in more than 190 countries around the world, according to the site.

The following are several COVID-19-sensitive ways to celebrate Earth Day at home:

Go for a walk and take a trash bag to clean up your neighborhood while you exercise.

Support local restaurants by purchasing to-go meals once a week.

Turn off lights if you're not in the room.

Go vegetarian/meat free for the day, week, month or however long you choose.

Get organized: Create donation stations within your home while doing spring cleaning. Keep the items until you are able to donate to a local organization or sell online.

Create a compost bin in your yard. Turn all your food scraps and yard trimmings into nourishment for a garden. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency offers tips on how to compost at home. <https://www.epa.gov/recycle/composting-home>

Plan a garden. This is the perfect time to grow seeds and start a garden at home. By growing

EARTH DAY
continued on page 17



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CODE: DP120461

Go local for all of your trash disposal needs

BY SUSAN MANNING
STAFF WRITER

It is spring cleaning time, so start cleaning and call a local company for pick up.

When you choose I-HAUL for your trash removal needs, you're

choosing to support a local business with long-standing ties to the community.

You will be getting something more than if you used one of those big box companies: you'll be getting Buz Bragdon, who was born and raised in Natick and

Business spotlight

runs I-HAUL Disposal Service as a detail-oriented, honest and friendly businessman.

I-HAUL Disposal Service takes the burden off of its customers by removing unwanted junk. It could be a pile of accumulated items in the middle of your garage floor, or it could be an entire house clean out.

It could include removing items from your office or your yard. You name it and I-HAUL can remove it. Bragdon takes the items and delivers them to the appropriate state and federally licensed facilities.

His is a custom service with fees based on each individual job because Bragdon knows each job is an individual situation and there is not a one-size-fits-all way of doing things.

I-HAUL can either work alongside you to help choose items for discard, they can place a container in your driveway or yard for you to load or they can do all the heavy lifting – you choose.

According to Bragdon, I-HAUL removes virtually everything including the kitchen



sink—trash, furniture, large and small household items, carpeting, appliances: It all goes. Outside of the house, construction debris, demolition materials, minerals, brush and other yard waste are all part of I-HAUL's day.

They take all waste ban items and most hazardous materials. Occasionally, when Bragdon hauls away a piece that might still have life left in it, he attempts to find a new home for it.

Worried because some of your items are large and you don't have the capacity or time to break them down? Don't be. I-HAUL will do the necessary preparatory work before hauling large items. They'll demolish a shed or cut up a fence or swing set, for example. They'll cut down overgrown areas

of your yard. I-HAUL is a full service company and performs exactly what you need done.

So what's the craziest thing he's ever hauled away?

"An old dentist's chair. It was big and heavy... And I was told I couldn't tip it to get better leverage because there was oil in the base that would spill everywhere if I did. We had to finagle it out carefully down the steps and then into the tall back of my truck," he explained.

Bragdon has been doing removal and disposal for more than 30 years. Nights and weekends, he hitched up his small utility trailer behind his mid-1970s station wagon and picked up trash and junk to bring to the local town landfills.

"Because I had a trailer, people would ask me if I could pick up this or I could pick up that and help them out. I brainstormed that this could turn into more than just helping and that's how I started," he said.

Much has changed in the decades that followed: the kind of vehicles needed, where to bring junk for proper disposal or recycling, even the kind of junk. In the beginning, no one had heard of "e-waste," for example and recycling was practically nonexistent.

Today, I-HAUL can recycle much of the debris collected and e-waste is a common component of what Bragdon deals with. Bragdon has also upgraded a few times from his old station wagon to a larger trucks to haul the kinds of stuff people have nowadays.

Bragdon said his turnaround is often the next day. To reach him, call 508-655-4968 or email ihaul@aol.com. Have a discussion of your removal and disposal needs with your local junk guy.

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A Look at America's Most Popular Pension Plan: Social Security

BY TIFFANY A. O'CONNELL, JD, LLM, CELA, AEP
PRINCIPAL ATTORNEY,
O'CONNELL LAW LLC

Approximately 50% of elderly Americans receive at least half of their income from Social Security. Let's take a look at this important program and some of the changes we will see this year.



Business spotlight



Eligibility

Eligibility for Social Security is based on the number of credits earned during your working years. In 2021, you will earn one credit for every \$1,470 you make, up to a maximum of four credits for the year. People born in 1929 or later need at least 40 credits to receive Social Security benefits when they retire.

How the System Works

Social Security is a pay-as-you-go system. Money paid into the program by current workers is used to pay for current retirees' benefits. Money that is left over goes into the Social Security Trust Fund, which is meant to be used when contributions no longer meet the program's obligations.

How to Receive "Full" Benefits

You can choose to begin taking Social Security benefits at age 62. However, this will lead to a lower monthly benefit than if you wait until full retirement age.

Your full retirement age depends on when you were born. If you were born:

- In 1960 or later, your full retirement age is 67
- Between 1955 and 1960, full retirement age ranges from 66 and two months to 66 and 10 months
- Between 1943 and 1954, full retirement age is 66
- Between 1938 and 1942, full retirement age ranges from 65 and two months to 65 and 10 months
- Before 1938, full retirement age is 65

How Much Will You Receive?

Your monthly benefit is based on how much you earned during your lifetime. The formula can get complicated, but basically the Social Security Administration averages the income from your 35 highest-earning years. You can go to the Social Security Retirement Estimator at <https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/retirement/estimator.html> to see how much you will receive.

Can You Keep Working and Still Receive Benefits?

Yes. If you have already reached full retirement age, you can continue working and receive your full benefit. If you have not yet reached full retirement age and continue working, your benefits will be reduced temporarily. However, the Social Security Administration will credit your "account" when you reach full retirement age, leading to a higher benefit.

The Spousal Benefit

Eligible spouses can claim Social Security benefits even if they have never held a paying job. To qualify, the "nonworking" spouse must be 62 or older and the spouse with a "work record" must already be receiving retirement or disability benefits. It's worth noting that widowed spouses become eligible for 100% of their partner's full benefit unless they also had a job and the benefit they earned from their own income is higher. In certain situations, divorced spouses can also be eligible for spousal benefits.

Taxes and Social Security

Depending on your income, you might have to pay taxes on Social Security benefits. For example, as of 2020, couples with a combined income of \$32,000 to \$44,000 who file a joint tax return may have to pay tax on up to half of their benefits. A combined income over \$44,000 could lead to 85% of a couple's Social Security benefits being taxed.

Social Security Funding Challenges

Social Security has collected more than it paid out for decades. As noted earlier, excess income went into the Social Security Trust Fund. According to AARP, this fund held \$2.9 trillion by the end of 2019. However, due to the retiree population growing faster than the working population, as well as the fact that people are living longer, Social Security is starting to pay out more than it takes in. Without changes to the way Social Security is financed, the trust fund is projected to run out in 2035.

Of course, even then Social Security will still collect taxes and pay benefits. According to recent estimates, however, it will only be able to cover 79% of scheduled benefits. To avoid that scenario, Congress would have to take measures to strengthen Social Security's finances, as it did in 1983 when the program's reserves were nearly exhausted. Given the program's importance, and the fact that millions of older Americans have been

paying into the system for decades, it is extremely unlikely Congress would fail to take the necessary steps to protect it.

Changes for 2021

The Social Security Administration announces its annual changes to the program every October. Here are some key changes that took effect on January 1st of this year, according to the Social Security Administration's fact sheet.

- Social Security recipients received a 1.3% increase for 2021. (Beneficiaries received a 1.6% increase in 2020.)
 - The maximum earnings subject to Social Security tax increased from \$137,700 a year to \$142,800 a year
 - The amount of money working Social Security recipients can earn before their benefits are reduced increased slightly
 - Social Security disability benefits also increased slightly
 - It now takes \$1,470 to earn a single Social Security credit, a \$60 increase from 2020
- You can learn much more about Social Security, and access a wide range of helpful tools, at <https://www.ssa.gov>.

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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 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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Senior center events

APRIL Mondays at a Museum – zoom program

free, register thru Community Pass or call the center 508-647-6540.

Join us on Monday, 11am-noon, as we preview video highlights from a range of Museums, free

April 5- Art in Gardens and parks- NYC Central Park, St James Park, London and NY Botanical Gardens

April 12-Frick Museum

April 19- Patriots Day - COA is closed

April 26- Manet, Bonnard, Vuillard and more

May/June Mindfulness Meditation- Zoom program

free, register thru Community Pass or call the center 508-647-6540.

Every Thursday with Sharon 1:00-1:40 pm. This meditation is audio only and participants are muted during the meditation portion. Everyone is welcome to join for some guided meditation, some quiet sitting and some reflection with Q & A and sharing.

Virtual History Bookgroup with Bacon Free Library/ Natick Historical Society

Thursday, April 8, 11am-noon, free

Join us for a discussion of historical fiction and nonfiction books. Our book pick is Purple Hibiscus by Chimamanda Ngozie Adichie (fiction). Sign up at <https://baconfreelibrary.org/clubs-programs/>

Forgotten Patriots: Little Known Heroes of the American Revolution- zoom program

Tuesday, April 13, 1:30-2:30, free, register thru Community Pass or call the center 508-647-6540.

We are all familiar with the names Washington, Adams, Franklin, and Lafayette. They were some of the important figures in our struggle for independence. Yet there were countless others whose deeds and sacrifices helped shape and win the Revolutionary War. This lecture will look at some of those lesser known, or even forgotten, patriots. Join historian Paolo DiGregorio for this talk. Thank you to Whitney Place Assisted Living & Memory Care for their generous support of this and other programs at our Center. Now open for Virtual Tours! Call (508) 655-



5000 to schedule yours today!

Meet Marth Washington-dramatization with Anne Barrett- zoom program

Wednesday, April 14, 1:30pm, free. register thru Community Pass or call the center 508-647-6540.

Meet the first First Lady, Martha Washington. Known for her genteel and quick-witted personality, she was devoted to her husband, as well as an outspoken and loyal patriot. This performance will include songs from the battlefields. Anne is an actress and singer who brings historical theatrical performances to communities across New England.

Earth Day - zoom program

Thursday, April 22, 1:30pm, free, register thru Community Pass or call the center 508-647-6540.

We'll stream a talk given by environmental activist and founder of 350.org, Bill McKibben in 2019 about climate change, what we need to do and where we go from here. We'll also hear from climate activist, Greta Thunberg and the CDC on How Climate Affects Communities.

Planning for Medicare- Countdown to 65- zoom program

Monday, April 26, 1:30-2:30pm, free. register thru Community Pass or call the center 508-647-6540.

Are you turning 65 soon? Then let us help you navigate signing up for Medicare! Whether you're continuing to work & remaining on your current health care plan or retiring and wanting Medicare coverage, you will need to enroll. We will cover the following:

- Explanation of Medicare Parts A, B, and C
- Medicare enrollment timeline
- Medigap plans that help supplement Medicare coverage
- Medicare Advantage plans, such as HMOs and PPOs

- Medicare Part D prescription drug plans

- Plans and programs available to early retirees, such as COBRA

Mother's Day Breakfast Goody Bag - Special Give-Away to pick up at Natick CSC

Wednesday, May 5 between 9:30am-11:30am, register thru Community Pass or call the center 508-647-6540.

RSVP required, free, call Natick Community Senior Center to register 508-647-6540.

Our traditional Mother's Day breakfast will be a bit different this year, it's Drive-Through! You are invited to enjoy a free bagged Panera continental breakfast including pastry, fruit cup and orange juice, plus a special surprise, provided by Mary Ann Morse Healthcare Center here in Natick. We'll have 100 breakfasts ready to go for community seniors, in honor of Mother's Day. Preregistration is required. Sponsored by Mary Ann Morse Healthcare Center, Natick

Art Matters- Mother and Child- zoom program

Wednesday, May 5, 1:30 pm, free, register thru Community Pass or call the center 508-647-6540.

The bond between mothers and their children is very special, very personal, and yet universal. This relationship transcends language, different cultures, great distances and time itself. We'll look at a range of art and artists from ancient times to modern including Cassatt, Picasso, Raphael, Kahlo and many more. Come and celebrate Mother's Day with this art appreciation! All are welcome. Sponsored by Mary Ann Morse Healthcare Center, Natick.

SENIORS
continued on page 17



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Sports

Young A Dynamic Leader For NHS Volleyball Squad

BY KEN HAMWEY
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Ella Young is finishing her third and final year of volleyball for Natick High in stylish fashion.

The 5-foot-11 middle hitter is a top-notch captain, leading in a variety of ways. And, although four games are a small sample size, the Redhawks' senior is getting her share of kills (23) and blocks (9). But, it's Young's academic efforts and her perspective on competing and co-existing with covid-19 modifications that make her a very special student-athlete.

"I'm fortunate to be able to play my senior year," said Young, a two-time National Honor Society member and a four-year high honors student. "We're all making the best of dealing with the changes and modifications. Even with wearing masks, no line judges, no benches and sanitizing, we're just glad to compete."

Young is quick to emphasize that "it's the health and safety of everyone in our community that's the top priority." And, she's thankful officials have found ways to schedule sports events while coping with the coronavirus.

"People have worked hard to make athletics possible," she noted. "They've strived to make our environment safe. It's important for me and my family to get



the virus under control. I have relatives who are high risk. The vaccines, hopefully, are a step in the right direction."

Every time Young is on a volleyball court, it's a step in the right direction for the Redhawks. A starter as a sophomore and junior, she was a prime contributor in helping Natick qualify for tourney play twice. Last year, she had 101 kills, 38 blocks, 23 service aces and a hitting percentage of .304 — quality statistics that were compiled after missing three

matches because of the flu.

The most memorable match of her career occurred against Acton-Boxboro during her junior season in the first round of the Sectional Tournament. She was returning after battling the flu for 2½ weeks.

"I had worked hard on my game," Young said. "When I entered the match, I got multiple kills and blocks and played a solid all-around game. The victory enabled us to advance to play Needham, which eliminated us from the playoffs."

Her coach, the legendary Peter Suxho, admires Young's strengths on the court and her leadership as a captain.

"Ella has improved a lot," he noted. "She's a very good attacker who relies on a high volleyball IQ, technical skills, an instinctive nature and athleticism. Her leadership is solid, on and off the court, and she's supportive of her teammates."

lead to blocks."

The 17-year-old Young entered the Fall 2 season with some specific goals. Since there are no sectional or state playoffs, her team objectives are to win as many games as possible and defeat Natick's top competition — Needham and Newton North.

"Needham and Newton North are well-coached and have talent," she offered. "Both teams are strong offensively. My individual goals are to enjoy the season and improve on my kills and hitting percentage. It would be nice to be selected a Bay State Conference all-star but it's not a prime concern."

Young likes the Redhawks' experience and skilled talent and she's appreciative of Natick's other senior captains — setter Alison Fahy and outside hitter Lauren Pole. "Alison was a captain as a junior," Young said. "So, her leadership is effective and valuable. She also is consistent in delivering the ball to where it has to be. Lauren is vocal in a positive way. She gets great placement on her hits and she's a very capable server."

A fan of Suxho, who's won State titles at Natick and Millis, Young likes his "tough-love" approach. "Coach Suxho's advice is unfiltered," she said. "He's a good motivator who knows how to develop team chemistry and he always has high expectations for his players."

Young, who has yet to select a college, plans on majoring in computer science. As for collegiate volleyball, she likely will play at the club level.

No matter where she's competing, Young, whose family moved to Natick when she was three, focuses on performing at a high level. "My priority is to do my best," she said. "Winning, reaching my potential and having fun are all part of my athletic philosophy."

The Redhawks were 3-1 after four matches and Young is pleased with the early results.

But, the numbers that matter most for Ella Young aren't wins and losses. Or her kills or blocks. It's the numbers that show the pandemic fading.

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SENIORS

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**Garden Tour at Elm Bank/
Mass Hort – in person**

Tuesday, May 25, 10:00am, rsvp required, free, register thru Community Pass or call the center 508-647-6540.

Garden Tour- limited to 15 participants. Meet at the main parking lot of Elm Bank, 900 Washington St, Wellesley. Join this lovely garden tour to admire shrubs, trees, flowers and learn about the history of this fascinating estate as well as horticultural plant identification and background stories. Highlights include the Bressingham Garden, Weezies garden for children (including pollinator plants), seed to table vegetable garden and the show stopping Italianate Garden by the Manor House. Some seats available throughout the gardens, but be prepared to stand and walk, wear comfortable shoes, hat etc. Bathrooms are available on-site. Allow 2 hours, but feel free to stop whenever. Rain Date will be Wednesday, May 26, 10:00am. Sponsored by Whitney Place Assisted Living Residences, Natick.

NOTES:

Home Fit Tips (12' video)

<https://states.aarp.org/massachusetts/watch-a-homefit-video-from-home>

Did you know that 89% of people 50 and older have told AARP that they want to remain in their homes for as long as possible? The AARP HomeFit program was developed to educate older adults how to navigate all living spaces independently to allow them to remain in their own homes as they age. Participants receive information on how to easily evaluate their own home for "livability" should they themselves or one of their family members become unable to use stairs, or must rely on assistive devices. It is designed help individuals plan for independence, choice and dignity as they age. AARP Massachusetts Executive Council member Ellie Meyer is an occupational therapist with 30 years experience covering a wide range of populations and settings. Ellie has put together this useful video to help you stay safe at home during COVID-19. You'll get tips to help you understand how homes can be designed and modified to help you get around independently in all of your living areas and how to make your home as safe as possible.

Author talks from NEHGS – zoom program

Monday 3/8, 1:30-2:30pm, free 1:06' **Abe: Abraham Lincoln in His Times** author talk by David S. Reynolds, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rabQgOx-HWmQ>

3/22, 1:20' **Demagogue-The Life and Long Shadow of Senator Joe McCarthy**, author talk NEHGS, <https://forum-network.org/lectures/demagogue-life-and-long-shadow-senator-joe-mccarthy/>

LINK for Social Security program 1 hour long; a little over an hour long- <https://states.aarp.org/massachusetts/want-to-know-more-about-social-security-join-our-webinar-october-21>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dfm6mfU5uko>

We'll stream this 1/2 hour talk given by environmental activist and founder of 350.org in 2019 about climate change, what we need to do and where we go from here. Greta Thunberg's TED talk 11' from 2019

CDC 4' you tube on How Climate Affects Communities

TBD- Bee Keeping for Bee-ginners- zoom program with NCOF

Wednesday, April 29, 1:30-2:30pm, free

Join Heather Livingstone and Antonio Nissi from Natick Community Organic Farm to learn all about bees, the benefits they bring, how you can encourage these pollinators to flourish and how you might get going on establishing your own beehive(s).

Earth Day Talk with Bill McKibben- zoom program

Thursday, April 22, 1:30pm, free, call Natick Community Senior Center to register 508-647-6540.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dfm6mfU5uko>

We'll stream this 24' talk given by environmental activist and founder of 350.org in 2019 about climate change, what we need to do and where we go from here.

Greta Thunberg's TED talk 11' from 2019, <https://www.google.com/search?q=ted+talk+greta+thunberg&oeq=ted+talk+greta&aqs=chrome..69j69i57j0l2j0i22i30l2.3l28j1j4&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>

CDC 4' you tube on How Climate Affects Communities, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JywsWktvODc>

EARTH DAY

continued from page 10

your own food, you may save some trips to the grocery store. Cornell University offers handy guides on how to grow vegetables and flowers, as we all as advice on how to design a flower garden. <http://www.gardening.cornell.edu/homegardening/>

Plant a pollinator garden. For tips, visit <http://putnam.cce.cornell.edu/gardening/pollinator-support>

Build a bat house. Bats play a key role in pollinating plants. <https://www.nwf.org/Garden-for-Wildlife/Cover/Build-a-Bat-House>

Build a bee boutique out of spare materials around the house. <https://www.foxleas.com/make-a-bee-hotel.asp>

Make art out of recycled materials. Become an Artist for the Earth.

Donate to a local food pantry. Take an Earth Day quiz. <https://www.earthday.org/earth-day-quizzes/>

Sources: <https://news.syr.edu/blog/2020/04/21/how-to-celebrate-earth-day-from-home/> and www.earthday.org

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Real Estate Corner

Now is the best time to sell your home

If anything good came out of 2020 it is the impact that the year's events have had for today's home seller. Lack of available inventory and pent-up buyer demand are driving home prices to an all-time high.

Flashback to March of 2020. While a home with proper pricing and exposure will sell at any time of year, the spring season finds the majority of buyers and sellers taking action. In March 2020 there was a ready, willing and able buyer pool. Buyers anticipated an onslaught of new homes to be listed. The Coronavirus got in the way of real estate business as usual. Instead of the seasonal influx of new properties the pandemic caused an immediate slowdown in new properties being introduced to the market

resulting in a historically low level of inventory. Available homes for buyers became as sparse as paper towels and cleaning products on grocery store shelves. Both buyers and sellers spent much of 2020 in limbo. With 2021 starting off with a reduction of positive Coronavirus tests and vaccines finally available, the real estate market is back in full swing. The buyers that were ready in Spring of 2020 are STILL ready and many now have an additional year's worth of income and savings for down payments. Add to those already planning to purchase a home in 2021 and the result is unprecedented buyer demand.

A deluge of sales toward the end of 2020 with buyers snatching up properties in record time has led to an impressive rebound.



With interest rates remaining low and buyer demand high there has never been a better time to sell a home. This is supported by statistics released by Realtor . Com. National inventory declined by over 48% over last year and the inventory of newly listed properties declined by over 24%.

Last year at this time there were 34 single family homes for sale in Natick with a median price of \$854,500. At the time of this writing there are just 16 single family homes for sale in Natick and the median price has increased to \$952,000.

Right now it is common to receive thirty to forty or more showing requests when a new property is introduced to the market. Multiple offers from qualified buyers ...sometimes 10 or more! Competitive buyers are doing whatever they can to get their offer accepted. Submitting bids well over asking price, waiving inspection and mortgage contingencies; anything they can do to improve their chances. Sellers should be careful to consider the complete offer: price AND terms, and not

be blinded solely by a large number which will ultimately mean nothing if the deal does not move through to closing. Sellers are realizing that there will be a moment in time when inventory will increase and added competition will contribute to the leveling of list prices. Some home owners that had not been considering a move in 2021 are changing their minds. There may never be a better time to take advantage of the lack of supply and huge buyer demand making this the strongest seller's market I have ever seen.

John McHugh is a Senior Associate and has been with Coldwell Banker for twenty years. He can be reached at JohnSellsNow@Gmail.com 978.902.5646

Natick Awarded with Community Grant to Address Local Downtown Recovery

Rep. David Linsky (D-Natick) announced today that Lt. Governor Karyn Polito, Housing and Economic Development Secretary Mike Kennealy, and Housing and Community Development Undersecretary Jennifer Maddox have awarded \$9.5 million in awards for Natick and 124 other communities to address COVID-19 impacts on local downtowns. Communities will partner with consultants to pursue locally-driven, actionable strategies to support downtown and commercial districts.

"Downtown Natick has always been a staple for the community and an exceptional place for Natick residents and small businesses to call home" said Representative Linsky. "I want to thank the Baker-Polito Administration for awarding Natick with this generous grant."

Natick along with the 124 other communities awarded with the Local Rapid Recovery Planning Program grant will be paired with their own consultant to help them plan for recovery post pandemic. This plan will

address short, medium and long term challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and will determine the appropriate amount of funding for Natick.

The Local Rapid Recovery Planning (LRRP) program is part of the Baker-Polito Administration's *Partnerships for Recovery Plan* to help communities stabilize and grow the Massachusetts economy. The plan invests in efforts to get people back to work, support small businesses, foster innovation, revitalize downtowns, and keep people in stable housing. These awards will

help downtown and commercial districts, and benefit more than 15,000 small businesses across the state.

The Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (MDI) offers funding to municipalities to increase local capacity and engage expert consultant services to implement downtown revitalization efforts. Funding enables municipalities to pursue projects that will help residents and small businesses. MDI helps municipalities create community spaces that prioritize community investment,



preserve and enhance local character, enhance accessibility, walkability, transportation, and promote downtown living.



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Real Estate Corner

Natick students make Keefe Tech Honor Roll



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

Lukasz Baran	9	High Honor Roll
Reid Campbell	9	High Honor Roll
Kiyomi Erickson	9	High Honor Roll
Cassidy Thompson-Crowder	9	High Honor Roll
Samuel Erickson	10	High Honor Roll
Talyn LaGrone	10	High Honor Roll
Lily Rosenstein	10	High Honor Roll
Peter Miller	12	High Honor Roll
Savannah Clarke	9	Honor Roll
Alexandra Millen	9	Honor Roll
Walkeny Pereira Junior	9	Honor Roll
Gabrielle Gaudet	10	Honor Roll
Jasne Gonzalez-Maciel	10	Honor Roll
Larissa De Oliveira	11	Honor Roll
Michael Lamont	11	Honor Roll
Ana Julia Oliveira	11	Honor Roll
Brock Howatt	12	Honor Roll
Scott Joyce	12	Honor Roll
Kieran Luff	12	Honor Roll
Aiden Sylvia	12	Honor Roll

The Spring Market is in Bloom!



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