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## Ashland Farmers Market's Brings Variety, New Flavors to 10th Season

By CYNTHIA WHITTY

The Ashland Farmers Market (AFM) is celebrating its 10th season with an official opening on Saturday, June 12, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., at 125 Front St., on the green across from the Ashland Public Library. There is a new international flavor to this season's vendor lineup, with plenty of variety and easy meals for busy families.

Although COVID restrictions will prevent eating at the market (masks will still be required by order of the Ashland Board of Health), vendors have adapted with new ways of taking home meals.

New this year is Lilac Hedge Farm, replacing Julie of Shady Pine Farm who is retiring, which will provide pasture-raised beef, pork, lamb,



**Mohamed Gobashi of Kabob House is one of the popular food vendors returning to Ashland Farmers Market for season 10.** (Photo/supplied)

poultry, and eggs. Lilac Hedge is a large family-run farm of 350 acres, and plans to bring a variety of pasture-raised meat and poultry products.

Lilac Farm family member Susan D'Amico explains,

"From the day an animal arrives or is born at our farm it is treated with the utmost respect and given 100 percent of our

**MARKET**

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## Meet Ashland's New Library Director, Meena Jain

By CYNTHIA WHITTY

Meena Jain was hired on April 12 to replace Ashland Public Library Director Paula Bonetti, who retired this past winter. A librarian for the past 16 years, Jain has held all levels of library positions and served as the director of the Bacon Free Library in Natick, all of which helped prepare her to take on her new role.

*Ashland Local Town Pages* interviewed Jain to find out a little about her background, what it's like to be the library director in a pandemic, and what her goals are for Ashland.



**Ashland's new library director, Meena Jain.** (Photo/supplied)

### Whitty: What prepared you for this job?

I've been a librarian since 2005—I came at it later in life, I was a social worker before I had kids—but I've been a lifelong reader and user of libraries. In fact, when I was deciding on a

career path, I asked my aunt who was a librarian if I should go in that direction and she said that libraries would be gone in 20 years. I'm happy to say that her fortune telling skills were on the fritz and I'm exactly where I want to be.

**LIBRARY**

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# Ashland Business Beat

By CYNTHIA WHITTY

## Summer Calendar

The Ashland Business Association (ABA) is planning a casual in-person networking event on June 10, 5:30 to 7 p.m., at The Corner Spot's "Open Mic Night," co-sponsored by AREA (Ashland Residents for Equity and Action). Sentic's Kitchen food truck will offer Afro BBQ fusion with homemade food inspired by recipes from Africa and East Africa. ABA members attend free; non-members, \$10.

Other summer events include a concert in July at Stone Park, where ABA members will be invited for \$25 to set up booths to display products or provide activities for kids, and a members-only BBQ at the YMCA Outdoors Center in Hopkinton on August 3 with other local area business associations and chambers of commerce. Food will be provided, including ice cream from the Refreshin' Concessions ice cream truck, sponsored by Paul Netopski, Critical Prism Defense LLC. For up-to-date information and to register for events, visit [ashlandbusinessassociation.com/events](http://ashlandbusinessassociation.com/events).

vided, including ice cream from the Refreshin' Concessions ice cream truck, sponsored by Paul Netopski, Critical Prism Defense LLC. For up-to-date information and to register for events, visit [ashlandbusinessassociation.com/events](http://ashlandbusinessassociation.com/events).

3 p.m., and will feature David Garden Band, Joey's Cannolis, Refreshin' Concessions ice cream truck, Imagine That! Face Painting, and more.

Save the date: CultureFest is scheduled for Saturday, July 24.

Book Chats, where readers will meet with other avid readers in the community to discuss books, will be ongoing. For more information, contact Ashley Place at the town's economic development office, [aplace@ashland-mass.com](mailto:aplace@ashland-mass.com).

For up-to-date information on activities and events, visit [www.thecorner-spotashland.com](http://www.thecorner-spotashland.com) and [www.facebook.com/thecorner-spotashland](http://www.facebook.com/thecorner-spotashland).

## Job Board

The town is maintaining a job board on the town website, [ashlandmass.com/552/Local-Job-Posting](http://ashlandmass.com/552/Local-Job-Posting). Businesses may email [BReynolds@ashlandmass.com](mailto:BReynolds@ashlandmass.com) when they have openings to post.

## The Corner Spot

The official Corner Spot opening is set for June 5, 12 to

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## MARKET

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efforts to give it the best life possible. Every life has meaning, and we do whatever it takes to help an animal thrive and prosper. Our animals are never given growth hormones or steroids."

Lilac Hedge will also bring Smith's Country Cheese from a local Winchendon farmstead cheese producer. Smith Country Cheese makes handcrafted aged cheddar, Gouda, and hickory smoked Gouda, as well as a variety of flavored Gouda spreads.

Grizzly Ventures will offer a variety of packaged spice rubs. A new venture for an Ashland resident and chef, David "Sparky" Spataro has experience in the service industry and has taught cooking classes for all ages.

Pooja Vishal of Urban Spice World will bring ready-to-cook meal kits for busy families. The concept is 'curry in a hurry' as she creates dry Indian spice blends and explains how to use them.

Once a month, Cousins Maine Lobster Truck is coming for lunchtime with lobster rolls, tacos, grilled cheese, shrimp tacos, chowder and lobster bisque. After each monthly market, they will move to The Corner Spot for the afternoon.

Divya Raghavan Molloy makes vegetarian/vegan Indian food in her restaurant Sethji's in Medfield and will bring her home-style Indian dishes to AFM. Molloy will offer a variety of pre-packaged meals to go, including chana masala, vegetable korma, chickpeas in coconut milk curry, vegetable samosas, chutneys, tapioca khichdi, and



celebrating **TEN** fresh years

mango Lassis.

Returning food vendors include Mohamed Gobashi of Kabob House. Gobashi is returning from Egypt and will sell his traditional Mediterranean foods wrapped for take-home. Bali Marle will also return but with an entirely different product line of packaged Indonesian themed products, including spicy peanuts and spicy sunflower seeds.

Each week AFM will host two creative local artisans. Their products will range from woven textiles to heirloom flower seedlings, handcrafted wood signs to recycled "plarn" (plastic yarn), and always distinctive jewelry, pottery, candles, and soaps.

At the Market Manager's tent, AFM will match the first \$20 for SNAP. Healthy Incentive Program (HIP) benefits, providing free fresh produce for SNAP users, will be available at AFM produce vendors, Upswing Farm and Long Life Farm.

Visitors will have one entrance and exit again this year at the end of the town parking lot. Well-behaved dogs will be permitted. Visitors are encouraged to bring reusable bags; bags will also be on hand. For up-to-date vendor information and to sign up to receive a weekly email, visit the website, [AshlandFarmersMarket.org](http://AshlandFarmersMarket.org).



# Around Ashland Town News

BY CYNTHIA WHITTY

## Annual Town Meeting

The annual town meeting, at the time of this writing, is scheduled for Saturday, June 12 at 10 a.m. at the Ashland High School, 65 East Union St. Information on the town meeting warrant is also not available at this time. Check the website for updates: [www.ashlandmass.com](http://www.ashlandmass.com).

## Grants Awarded to the Town

The town announced recently that it received three grants: the Mass. Office of Business Development awarded Ashland, Framingham, and Natick a \$250,000 Business Marketing Technical Assistance Grant; the Massachusetts Department of Transportation awarded Ashland \$300,000 through the Shared Winter Streets and Spaces Grant Program; and the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security and the Department of Fire Services awarded the Ashland Fire Department \$14,955 through the Firefighter Safety Equipment Grant Program.

## Construction Around Town

To stay up to date on the Rt. 126/ Pond Street, the Downtown Revitalization, and the Public Safety Building construction projects, visit the town website, [www.ashlandmass.com](http://www.ashlandmass.com), or sign up for the Construction Newsletter at [www.ashlandmass.com/160/Department-of-Public-Works](http://www.ashlandmass.com/160/Department-of-Public-Works).



Ashland's new Health Director, Rajit Gupta. (Photo/supplied)

## New Hire: Rajit Gupta

Rajit Gupta was hired as the town's new health director in May. According to a statement from the town, Gupta will focus on communication and education as the Board of Health addresses some of the most important public health challenges, such as opioid and other addictions, hoarding, mental health issues, health inequities, and insect-related sicknesses such as mosquito and tick-borne illnesses. He will also play a role in the ongoing COVID response activities working closely with Sgt. Ed Burman, the primary point of contact for the COVID-19 task force. Gupta recently served Wattertown Public Health Department as the Chief Environmental Health Officer and previously, as the Public Health Inspector in Framingham, and has been an environmental health and safety consultant for private companies.

## LIBRARY

*continued from page 1*

I think what's prepared me for this job is having had experience in every aspect of libraries: I've been a children's librarian in an elementary school; I've worked in technology, programming, reference, circulation, tech services, and so forth, so I have a deep grounding in what it takes for a library to run. I was fortunate to be the director of the Bacon Free Library in Natick for three years, which really prepared me for this position—learning how to be both an inward and outward facing leader of a small library that served a very supportive community.

Having worked in big and small libraries, I've learned that working in a town like Ashland is a perfect fit for me. It's a community that loves its library, we can get to know our patrons by name—we're kind of like "Cheers" for libraries :, and we can provide services both singly and in collaboration with other community organizations to bring the best services to our patrons. But, getting to know people as they walk in the door is the biggest appeal to me.

## Whitty: What is it like to be the director in the middle (or maybe, the end) of a pandemic?

The pandemic has been so awful for so many reasons, but

I think libraries have pivoted to continue to provide services and programs to their communities to keep people connected during such a disjointed time. I love that the Ashland library has allowed for both curbside and browsing so that people could get their materials and come to a safe space to be away from the stressors for a short time. From what I've seen, the Ashland library staff (and library staff across the country) have been heroic in their commitment to continue to provide for their communities. It's an honor and a pleasure to join this team to continue this dedicated service, and to also figure out what we can do differently (or the same) in the future. The pandemic has been terrible, but it has also given us an opportunity to rethink our service model and consider how we can provide innovatively in the future. This time, right now, is an exciting time for me to join the Ashland Public Library.

## Whitty: What are your plans and goals for the Ashland library?

Of course, the first goal is to reopen to the public safely, both for patrons and for the staff. We are actively working with the town administration and the Library Board of Trustees to see how that can happen. Beyond that, I'm learning what Ashlanders want from their library; this will be incredibly important in the next year as we figure out our "new normal" and create

our five-year strategic plan. In conjunction with the Friends of the Ashland library, I'd like to bring back and enhance the library programming, both in-person and virtual, reach out to our community partners to see how we can collaborate in the future, as well as make sure that every person in Ashland can feel there is something at their library for them.

## Whitty: What do you read in your spare time?

I read almost anything but I really enjoy romance, science fiction, historical fiction, steam-punk, and, although I'm not the best cook, cookbooks. I also love children's books and still try to get my kids to listen to me read aloud. It was much easier when they were in elementary school but I think reading aloud is something for every age, hence, my love of audiobooks!

I live nearby and am enjoying my 12-minute commute. I'm married with two kids, one who graduated from college two years ago, one graduating in May. When I'm not working, I like to read, try new foods, hang out with friends, travel, and buy antiques."

Jain wants to remind residents that the library has a new newsletter. Patrons can stay up to date on library news by subscribing on the town website, [www.ashlandmass.com/184/Ashland-Public-Library](http://www.ashlandmass.com/184/Ashland-Public-Library).



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# Choosing The Right Countertop

By JOHN SZOLOMAYER, RE/MAX EXECUTIVE REALTY

Your kitchen counters need to work for your lifestyle. There are many materials to choose from, so how do you decide? Here are a few ideas that can get you started when you pick out the countertop for your home.

**Granite:** Granite is a naturally occurring stone used frequently in kitchen countertops. The stone is sourced from quarries and is cut into thin slabs that can be polished and fit as countertops. It has several benefits,

including an easy-to-clean surface without cracks or crevices.

**Marble:** Like granite, marble is a natural stone. It is typically found in shades of white and makes an excellent single-surface countertop. Once polished, marble counters are high-gloss and easy to use. No two marble countertops are the same.

**Tile:** Some people like to use tile made of ceramic, stone or glass on countertops. It is easy for do-it-yourself counter builders. However, you must use the correct grout to ensure that the counters stay clean and free of debris.

**Wood:** A popular choice for countertops right now is wood. Wooden countertops are also referred to as "butcher blocks" and are durable, cleanable and attractive. However, they need additional care to keep them clean and free of damage.

**Laminate:** Laminate countertops have come a long way since they were first introduced in the mid-20th century. Laminate is good for budget-conscious homeowners and can mimic natural forms such as granite or wood, among other fun patterns.

**Concrete:** Some homeowners love the look of concrete countertops, which can be poured in custom forms. Once the concrete is set, the surface is durable. Concrete can also be tinted or have decorative aggregates added.

**What kind of countertop do you want in your kitchen?** Contact me today to see how I can help.

*Information provided by John Szolomayer from RE/MAX Executive Realty. For more information, John can be reached at JohnSzolomayer.com or 508-259-4788.*

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- How to get help for someone in crisis.

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# Mindess School Student Named an AT&T Inventor's Challenge Winner

BY CYNTHIA WHITTY

AT&T and Imagination.org, powered by Two Bit Circus Foundation, recently announced the winners of the 2020 Inventor's Challenge. Eleven-year old Anish Meruva, a 5th grade student at David Mindess Elementary School and co-founder and president of the Ashland Innovation 4-H Club, won the Alexander Graham Bell Prize (3rd - 5th Grade) for his Automatic Self Watering Plant.

The Inventor's Challenge, according to an imagination.org press release, empowers young inventors to harness their creative potential and address real issues that they face every day—fostering critical 21st century skills and attitudes, like innovation, optimism, empathy, and the willingness to experiment and take risks. With the support of AT&T, Imagination.org challenged children from over 200 cities around the world to create a solution to a problem within their homes, schools or communities.

Over 5,500 students participated globally to invent more than 125 potential solutions to



Anish Meruva was a winner in the international Inventor's Challenge competition. (Photo/supplied)

problems around their homes, schools, and communities.

Each winner will receive a Bitsbox kit, a learning system that teaches coding, WildCards, robotics hardware and software plat-

form, AT&T/Imagination.org/Two Bit Circus Foundation swag, and a Samsung tablet. (See [twobitcircus.reportablenews.com/pr/winners-att-inventor-s-challenge](http://twobitcircus.reportablenews.com/pr/winners-att-inventor-s-challenge).)

# Get Your Summer Reading Here!

The Friends of the Ashland Public Library will hold a "Drive-Buy" contact-free book sale in the Montenegro Square parking lot across from the library on Sunday, June 6, 1 to 3 p.m. Hard or soft cover books and CDs and DVDs will be packaged by category in sealed paper bags; the contents of

each will be a surprise. All books are gently used and in good condition. No refunds. Cash only. Proceeds from the book sale will support library programming. For changes in date due to inclement weather, visit the Friends' Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/FriendsoftheAshlandPublicLibrary](http://www.facebook.com/FriendsoftheAshlandPublicLibrary).



Photo/Cynthia Whitty

# Greater Ashland Lions Club News

Welcome Summer and the 28th Anniversary of the Greater Ashland Lions Club on the 21st of June. Our club, like so many other organizations, has embraced and endured the past year with diversity and kindness with all our families and friends, co-workers and community we are looking forward to many activities and programs to bring to you in the days ahead.

The Officers of the Greater Ashland Lions Club will be inducted in June for the upcoming Lions year 2021-2022 at a time to be determined, they are eager to SERVE the needs of the Community with many exciting activities for the public to participate and enjoy.

## High School Scholarships

Congratulations to the recipients of this years Great Ashland Lions Scholarships and their continuation on their road to achieve

their dreams. Each year two scholarships have been awarded one to an Ashland High School student and one to a student from the Joseph P. Keefe Technical School to pursue their education.

## Relay for Life

On May 15, 2021, the Annual Relay for Life had a rolling parade to begin this year's campaign to raise funds and awareness for Breast Cancer. The Greater Ashland Lions will be accepting your donations in any amount for this event send to Greater Ashland Lions, P.O. Box 41, Ashland, MA 01721 for info. Contact Lion Ro at 508-881-4743 or Lion Shelly 508-881-4739.

## Coupons for Education

Our Lions Club has been clipping and collecting coupons for education for many years and Thank You for contributing, many dollars have been collected

by clipping that coupon with a value of 10 cents. (it all adds up). Back in 1998 the campaign was launch by General Mills to help support education since then millions of dollars have gone to schools though out the country for purchasing computers, library books, fund field trips or what ever may be needed in their schools. A school could earn \$80,000 per year just from clipping coupons from products such as Cheerios, Betty Crocker, Pillsbury, Ziplock, Scott and the list goes on. For more info. Contact Lion Ellie 508-875-4513.

We wish you all a HAPPY SUMMER, stay safe, wear your mask, safe distance and wash your hands. Interested in becoming a Greater Ashland Lion contact Lion Ellie 508-875-4513.

Submitted by  
Lion Ellie Torelli



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# Updating Ashland's Housing Production Plan for Diversity and Affordability

By CYNTHIA WHITTY

Brandi Kinsman, member of the Select Board and the Housing Production Plan (HPP) Steering Committee, began working collaboratively with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and the town's Planning Department in fall of 2020 to update the town's original HPP, which was done in 2015. The purpose of the update, according to Kinsman, is to further increase Ashland's housing diversity and affordability and provide equitable opportunities for everyone.

"Through the data collection of current housing and demographics in Ashland along with public input, we are outlining housing goals for our community for the next five years," Kinsman explained. "As a second part of this project, we are looking to develop an Inclusionary housing bylaw, which would require all future development to have an affordable housing component."

MAPC was hired by the town as the consultant for the project, using funding from state and MAPC grants, as well as \$15,000 in support from the Affordable Housing Trust.



HPP Steering Committee members are Tricia Kendall (Planning Board), Ron Etskovitz (Board of Health), Aaron Ladd (Community Preservation Committee), Steve Greenberg (Affordable Housing Trust), and David Rosenblum (Affordable Housing Trust).

In this Ashland Local Town Pages conversation, Kinsman discusses who will benefit from the plan, the process for creating the plan, public input, and next steps.

**Whitty: Who will benefit from the plan?**

First, a state-certified HPP is considered a best practice for a community as they plan for their housing needs, and it can lead to additional grant funding opportunities. We especially want to look for ways to support the work of the Affordable Housing Trust and increase our affordable/workforce housing in Ashland. Second, as we make progress to-

wards our 10 percent Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) that the state mandates, a HPP can give us safe harbor status from a 40B development. 40B is state legislation that allows developers that have a project with 20-25 percent affordable housing component to bypass local zoning requirements. A 40B can result in a development with more units or in a different location than the town would want. When we did the initial HPP in 2015, our town was at 3.66 percent SHI and now we are at 6.31 percent. We still have a ways to go, but we are making steady progress and creating affordable housing remains a priority for the town.

**Whitty: What is the process for creating the plan?**

Over the winter of 2020, MAPC conducted a needs assessment and gathered demographics and current housing data.

Over the last several months we have gathered public input from public forums and focus groups. All of this shapes our goals and strategies for the next 5 years, which were incorporated into the HPP. The Housing Production Plan will be presented to a joint session of the Select Board and the Planning Board on May 19. If adopted by both boards, the HPP will be sent to the state for review and certification. The steering committee and MAPC will shift their focus to creating an Inclusionary Housing bylaw this summer and fall.

**Whitty: How will the public be involved?**

As part of this process, it is important to increase community awareness of housing issues and encourage public participation. MAPC has conducted two public forums and two focus group sessions (one focused on housing need and one on housing development) to include public input on the HPP. There will be two additional opportunities for the public to provide input this summer/fall on the creation of the Inclusionary Housing bylaw. We hope to bring the bylaw to all residents at our 2021 fall Town Meeting.

**Whitty: What will happen when the plan is created?**

The goals and strategies included in the HPP will become a roadmap for our housing decisions for the next five years. MAPC is also creating a story map, a website that will have an executive summary of the HPP update, recommendations, and interactive map for the public. All information and documents on this project, including links to the public forums are on the town's website at ashlandmass.com/848/housing.

Please keep an eye open for ways to provide public input on the Inclusionary Housing bylaw this summer/fall as this is an impactful way we can bring affordable housing to Ashland. If anyone has any questions, please feel free to reach out to me, bkinsman@ashlandmass.com, Town Planner Peter Matchak, and Assistant Town Planner Emma Snellings.

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# New Dependent Care FSA Changes Provide Tax Savings

Mo' stimmy, mo' complexity. It's like the more stimulus we come across, the more complexities we see.

**The Good.** The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), signed into law on March 11, raises pretax contribution limits for dependent care flexible spending accounts (DC-FSAs). New DC-FSA annual limits for pretax contributions increases to \$10,500 (up from \$5,000) for single taxpayers and married couples filing jointly, and to \$5,250 (up from \$2,500) for married individuals filing separately. This is only calendar year 2021, for now.

Money put into a DC-FSA not only reduces taxable income but it also avoids the 7.65% tax of Social Security and Medicare.

For example, if in a 24% federal tax bracket + 5% state tax + 7.65% = 36.65% DC-FSA Contribution Tax Savings Rate. Thus, the new \$10,500 maximum for 2021 is \$3,848 tax savings in this scenario. In a 32% federal bracket, make it \$4,688 (44.65%

x \$10,500) in tax savings.

So just go to your HR benefits and raise your DC-FSA amounts?

If it were only that simple, as Congress loves complexity.

**The Bad.** APRA doesn't require employers to offer the new DC-FSA annual limits. Those that are, many offer a one-time, midyear change. If you're not proactive or paying attention to HR communications, you will miss out.

If miss out on DC-FSA, fear not as the ARPA also increased the child & dependent care (C&DC) tax credit for 2021, which is positive but...

**The Ugly.** The C&DC credit is fully refundable, and maximum credit percentage increases to 50% (from 35%). This phases down to 20% with AGIs between \$125,000 and \$400,000, and further phases down 1% for each \$2,000 over an AGI exceeding \$400,000. The amount of expenses eligible for the credit increases to \$8,000 (from \$3,000) for one qualifying child and

\$16,000 (from \$6,000) for two or more qualifying children, thus maximum credits are \$4,000 and \$8,000.

Got that?

Furthermore, you can't "double-dip". Meaning contributions to DC-FSA to cover qualified expenses can't be used for C&DC tax credit, but you can create a combination to maximize tax savings.

**Questions To Ask.** If better to put money into a DC-FSA or take C&DC tax credit or a combination, consider:

- Able to participate in DC-FSA?
- What is your AGI?
- How many qualifying children?
- Expected qualified dependent care expenses (i.e. day-care, after-school, summer camp)?

Yes, summer camps count, even for your 12 year old's soccer camp.



Glenn Brown

Tax laws and regulatory changes remain constant, connect with your Certified Financial Planner to see how to maximize tax savings to your situation.

*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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# Decisions at Every Turn Coalition: Tips for a Safe and Fun Summer

With the warm months upon us, Ashland's Decisions at Every Turn (DAET) Coalition, like everyone, is eager to take advantage of the opportunity to open our windows, explore the outdoors, and reconnect (safely) with people and traditions that make the summer so special. The message of safety is always relevant, but even more so during this time of year. We would like to remind families that as you embrace the summer season, here are some tips to keep in mind.

## Outdoor safety

Kids of all ages are more likely to be outside during the summer months. Older children are often given the freedom to walk downtown, play in public parks, or attend activities without parental supervision. Talk with your children about simple steps they can take to stay safe as they enjoy the outdoors.

- Wear a helmet and obey road regulations when riding a bike
- Use sunscreen and drink water to stay hydrated when outdoors

- Wear long sleeved shirts and pants in wooded/trail areas to minimize the risk of tick and other bug bites
- Swim only in designated areas or those under supervision of a lifeguard
- Discuss actions your child should take if they are approached by a stranger

## In the house

During the summer months, older children are often at home for extended periods of time while parents are at work. Some may be in charge of watching younger siblings. For all children, having "downtime" is important and necessary, but prolonged periods of time without supervision can increase the chances of risky behaviors. Some helpful tips for parents:

- Monitor online activity and know which websites, chatrooms or apps your children are using
- Discuss and enforce your rules and expectations regarding social media. For example, watch for signs of online bullying behaviors if

your child is a frequent user of texting, instant messaging, Instagram, Snapchat or Facebook.

- Make sure smoke detectors and fire alarms have batteries and are working properly
- Keep all alcohol and medications locked up
- Discuss a safety plan with your child in case of an emergency

## Especially for teens

The summer can be a particularly exhilarating time for teens. With the intensity of this untraditional school year behind them, they have an opportunity to reconnect with friends, have a job, or explore new activities. Teens can benefit from this additional freedom, if balanced with parental expectations. Remind your teen:

- Follow COVID safety regulations and protocols
- No cell phones or texting while driving and always wear a seatbelt
- As a driver, be aware of the increase in bicyclists on the road

**SUMMER FUN FOR FAMILIES**

- HIKE
- PICNIC
- BEACH DAY
- LOCAL MUSEUM
- EXPLORE A NEW TOWN IN MASS
- SCAVENGER HUNTS
- BACKYARD CAMPING
- COOK AN ELABORATE MEAL WITH EVERYONE INVOLVED
- TACKLE A HOUSE PROJECT
- CREATE AN OUTDOOR OASIS
- FAMILY SPORTS TOURNAMENT
- YOGA
- GET CREATIVE!

THINGS TO CHECK OUT... IDEAS TO DO WITH YOUR TEEN  
[HTTPS://WWW.VERYWELLFAMILY.COM/FUN-THINGS-FOR-TEENS-TO-DO-THIS-SUMMER-261143](https://www.verywellfamily.com/fun-things-for-teens-to-do-this-summer-261143)  
 FAMILY FUN IN MASS  
[HTTPS://WWW.VISIT-MASSACHUSETTS.COM/STATE/FAMILY-ACTIVITIES/](https://www.visit-massachusetts.com/state/family-activities/)

- No parties where alcohol or other drugs are present
- Never ride with an impaired driver
- Observe curfew and other family guidelines
- You are available for them

if they are in a dangerous or uncomfortable situation. Have a code word that your teen can use with you to ask for help.

## DAET Resources

DAET will be offering opportunities and resources throughout the summer to encourage connection through substance-free family-friendly activities. Check out our Summer Fun for Families idea list and watch for more by following us on social media or joining our email list. For more information, visit DAET on Facebook; Twitter @ashlandDAET; and Instagram @ashlanddecisions, and join the mailing list at [ashlanddecisions.org/get-involved](http://ashlanddecisions.org/get-involved).

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# The b.LUXE Beauty Beat

Hello and welcome to the b.LUXE Beauty Beat, a new monthly column covering all things beauty!

We'll share new hair trends, makeup tips, skincare advice, and our must-have products of the moment.

For many of us, 2020 was the year we stayed home, the year we worked from our kitchen tables and forgot what it felt like to wear pants with buttons.

Self-care in 2020 was a challenge. With our salons, spas and gyms closed, many of us were left to navigate a home health and beauty routine that wasn't always healthy or beautiful.

But those months in quarantine certainly showed us that we're stronger and more resilient than we ever imagined. And our idea of beauty in this (almost) post-pandemic world has changed so much. We're taking a healthier approach, with more emphasis on what's good for us, as opposed to what just makes us look good. A "less is more" philosophy, perhaps, this shift in our beauty doctrine gives our health and our aesthetic equal attention.

So, with this in mind, let's chat a little bit about this month's most important beauty tip - SUN-SCREEN!

If there's one thing we're all pumped for it's Summer. Outdoor gatherings, beach days and that warm, summer sun is just around the corner.

What should we do to prepare ourselves for the sunshine?

We can't stress to you enough the importance of wearing a daily SPF on your face and any exposed skin. Again, it's good for you AND good for your appearance. Regular daily use of SPF 15 sunscreen can reduce your risk of developing squamous cell carcinoma (SCC) by about 40%, and lower your melanoma risk by 50% (skincancer.org) Also, regular use of SPF keeps you from looking like a handbag. So there's that...

What many people don't know about sun protection is that SPF application shouldn't stop at the hairline. Your scalp is your skin, too, and if exposed, it'll burn. Work that sunscreen through your part and any bare, unprotected areas on your head. Even better, wear a hat! Sun hats are great for protecting your skin and your hair's health. UV rays can cause hair to become dry and brittle and fade your hair color simply from exposure. We also recommend a heat protection spray that coats the tresses,



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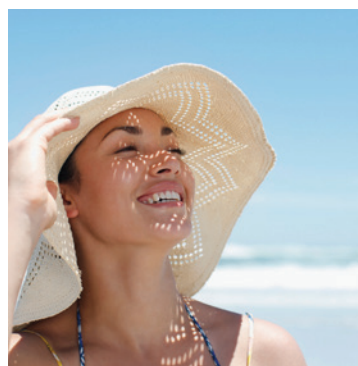
locking in moisture and saving your beautiful hue. See products below.

Next month we'll talk about safeguarding your hair from pool and hard water, hand painted highlights and packing the perfect beach bag.

Recommended products are available for purchase at b.LUXE Hair + Makeup Studio, Medway Use **CODE LTP10** to receive 10% off these products, now through June 30th

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# Ashland Lions Regatta

Ashland Lions had a very successful first annual toy boat Regatta fundraiser. Thanks to Lion Dok and the Lions who worked on this fundraiser, along with Boy Scouts Troop 232 for helping to hold the race, and to everyone who bought an entry into the race. We look forward to having another successful event next Spring.



## Annual Lions Golf Tournament

Join us for the Ashland Lions Annual Golf Tournament, to be held Monday, October 4th, 2021, at the Highfields Golf and Country Club in Grafton. There will be golf, a meal, raffles and a day of fun to support the Ashland Lions and their mission of donating to Eye Research and Local Charities. Sponsorship opportunities available. For details contact Tom Heguy @ 508-881-1122 or Paul Ciccolo at 508-881-2397.

## Whodunnit? Murder In Sin City

The Ashland Lions Club is teaming up with Lions Clubs in Sherborn and Bellingham mys-

tery dinner. The event has been moved to Saturday, October 9th, 2021, 6:30pm-11:00pm. Participants will be assigned a role to play in solving a murder mystery! The event will be held at the VFW, 311 Pleasant St, Ashland. Tickets are available for \$35 on Eventbrite.com under "Murder in Sin City", or call Lion Eileen at 508-861-3226. Ticket price includes admission and an appetizer buffet. There will also be a cash bar, raffles and prizes. Currently only 150 tickets will be sold (this number subject to reduction as guidelines change for social distancing). All proceeds will benefit local hosting Lions Club charities.

## Eyeglass and Cellphone Collection

Eyeglass and cellphone collection is a year-round project with collection of used prescription and nonprescription eyeglasses,

sunglasses, hearing aids and cell phones.

Collection boxes are located at:  
Ashland Post Office  
Ashland Senior Center  
Sunnyside Café - Ashland  
Moody Optical - Ashland  
Middlesex Bank –  
Ashland and Hopkinton  
Fayville, MA Post Office  
Studio Optics – Framingham

## New year, new members

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

Stay up-to-date on Lions happenings

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

*Lion Dan Mitchell*

# Connecting Ashland Businesses with the Community!

The Ashland Business Association is here for you, providing products and services where you live!

Find us at [www.ashlandbusinessassociation.com/directory](http://www.ashlandbusinessassociation.com/directory).

Not an ABA member? Join today: [www.ashlandbusinessassociation.com/join-us](http://www.ashlandbusinessassociation.com/join-us). By partnering with other business groups and the town, the ABA promotes its business members, provides educational programs and networking opportunities, and more!

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# Students, Groups, and Individuals Clean up Ashland at Annual Event

By CYNTHIA WHITTY

Residents turned out on the first weekend in May to clean up the town for the annual GreenUp Ashland event. Most event registrations were completed online, though a few residents chose to sign up in person on April 30, the day residents picked up their big yellow trash bags in the Town Hall parking lot.

GreenUp coordinators reported stats from the May event:

- 125 yellow bags were distributed
- 145 participants cleaned up around town
- 99 locations in town were cleaned up
- 4 Cub Scout Troops participated (Lion Den, Cub Scout Den 5 and 7)
- 2 Girl Scout Troops participated (Troop 75356, Troop 89246, and others)
- 2 businesses participated (United Home Experts and CalculatorSoup.com)
- 7 organizations participated (Ashland Lions Club, Workmen's Circle, Ashland Democratic Town Committee, Connect Church/Outreach Services, Environmental Action Club, CHAMPIONS After School of Ashland, and Ashland Innovation 4-H Club)

Dozens of Ashland High School students earned community service hours. Photography was provided by AHS student Andrew Klay and GreenUp Ashland committee members.

"The GreenUp committee spent hours planning and coordinating the event. We are so thankful to all who participated in making Ashland look so squeaky clean!" Jeanne Walker, GreenUp committee member, said.

Any resident or business may sign up for GUA's ongoing Adopt-A-Street program, where citizens choose a street to keep picked up throughout the year. For more information on the program, visit [www.greenupashland.org](http://www.greenupashland.org).



The GUA Committee at Town Hall parking lot distributing bags on April 30. (Photo/supplied)

**Ashland Innovation 4-H Club members and friends: Front (l to r) Viraj Harish, Saachi Rane, Aarav Sanghavi, Anish Meruva, Hasini Meruva, Sreemithra Ambati, Mayuka Reddyvari (not a club member); Back (l to r): Club leaders Sandya Rani Meruva Thirupaiahgari and Venkata Subbaiah Meruva Thirupaiahgari and parents Ram Ambati and Kiran Reddyvari. (Photo/supplied)**



Ashland High School student Jennifer Pickette. (Photo/supplied)



Ashland Lions (Photo/supplied)

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# Aging Gracefully: Advice on What to do Now!

Doctors and patients have all kinds of difficult conversations. How to prepare for aging and caring for an aging partner or parent is one of those. For Lee Willis and her husband Hal, the conversation started this way: their beloved doctor of 15 years asked Lee, point-blank: "Are you prepared for the possibility that Hal may outlive you?"

At 94, Hal is ten years older than Lee. A plane accident broke multiple bones in his legs, and arthritis had settled in. Walking is hard for him. He does his own laundry and washes the dishes, but he doesn't drive and often uses a wheelchair.

Lee, on the other hand, just bought herself a new kayak. A nine-year cancer survivor, she relieves pain with exercise, not medicine. She swims three times a week. When not caring for Hal, she's active, traveling, and socializing.

Still, the doctor had a point: Be prepared.

## Facing the Facts of Aging

Most people avoid the subject of getting old. Death is as natural

as birth, but too many people simply don't want to think about it until they are too ill to participate in decision making, leaving family members and their physicians to make decisions that may or may not be what they would have wanted at the end of life. We need to prepare better.

## Finding a Place to Age

The main goal for Lee in preparing for Hal and her own aging was to find a place that could happen. Lee didn't just do a Google search. She visited dozens of nursing homes. She made lists of in-home care services, and visited each of those.

But Lee wasn't satisfied, mainly because of shifting staff. "You can never guarantee the same people. The bottom-line dictates staffing. This turnover and the resulting lack in continuity of care, is a problem."

So, she looked at the option of aging in place. She volunteered at programs of all-inclusive care for the Elderly, which offers 24/7 coverage for anyone qualified for a nursing home. It seemed like "this would probably be what we



choose to do," she said.

But then Lee discovered The Green House Project, a new model for long-term care for elders. In 2001, a doctor named Bill Thomas was appalled at the state of elder care. He saw it was a hospital, not a home with people just sitting in wheelchairs. So, he introduced a lot of changes, brought in birds, dogs, cats, and plants. But it still wasn't enough. So, he "super-trained" staff to behave like family members, not healthcare providers. He built a new structure, with one central room, the residents living in rooms off in spokes. It became a communal place, with a common kitchen where people cook family recipes and behave like relatives.

Lee found one in her state. "If we both have to go somewhere, this will be it!"

## Aging Gracefully: How to Get Started Now

The best advice Lee's received from her doctor: Exercise. He told her that the biggest factor that differentiates healthy from

unhealthy aging is exercise—folks who remain sedentary clearly become frailer more rapidly than those who either remain or become active in their later years. Exercising on a regular basis makes a huge difference in how one ages.

Lee's primary lessons for younger people: Be proactive. "It's really hard when you're 50 to think about being 80, but you should." She advises younger people to:

- Take your health seriously—eat well and exercise.
- Prepare with a reputable Estate Planning Attorney who cares about your health as well as your assets.
- Be an advocate for yourself.
- Get political and advocate for end-of-life care.

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June 2021

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# Sports

## Triplet Siblings in Track and Field

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,  
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

It all began in sixth grade when the Ezeh triplets Sarah, David, and Patrick (oldest to youngest) were looking for something to keep them busy after school when they happened across running.

The trio, who also began playing soccer at a very young age while living in Connecticut, only had the choice of cross country and track and field while they attended middle school.

With only two options the Ezeh triplets decided to give running a shot. First up was cross country, which none of the triplets particularly cared for, but track and field—that was a different animal.

“I wasn’t a fan of cross country, track was much better as there were so many different events to try,” David said. “Running three plus miles was way too long of an event for me. I’d much rather prefer the sprinting events compared to the distance.”

Attending middle school, David found himself running the 100 meter and doing the high jump; Patrick also was running the 100 and in seventh grade he joined his brother in the high jump while Sarah was participating in both the 100 and 200-meter races. Although the triplets were all participating in similar events it was just a coincidence.

“Running in the sprinting events was something that we all enjoyed, it just happened that we all liked the same events,” Patrick said. “When it comes to track and field, I personally like the competitiveness. Soccer is a team sport and although track is too, I like that in track it’s all up to me win or lose. It may be much more nerve racking but it’s also more exciting knowing that everything is on my shoulders.”

Like her brothers, Sarah was not too thrilled with cross country either and gravitated toward the 200, compared to the 100, which her siblings preferred.

“I was not into all the running in cross country, it was too far for me, but I did like the shorter distance in track,” she said. “I prefer the 200 as it takes me a bit to warm up and get going. Not only do I feel better suited for that race it allows me to push myself to get that faster time.”

Ashland Track Coach Chris Avery feels blessed to have the juniors on her squad.

“All three of the Ezeh’s are good at running the sprints, but their true usefulness is to be flexible during any given track meet. They have all taken on different events through the years that have helped the team to be successful.”

Over the years David has included the shot put, triple jump, javelin and now the hurdles in his arsenal, while Patrick has added



the 200, which has become his best event, and Sarah has taken part in the shot put and discus. The ability to help the Clockers succeed on the track as well as in the field has allowed the Ezeh triplets to try those different events.

“This past indoor season the team was in need of girl shot put throwers so along with a friend I decided to give it a try,” Sarah said. “It was something different instead of just running.”

In addition to taking on some many different events to help the team out, the Ezehs are very competitive amongst one another.

“Trying different events allows you to go out there and do something different for the good of the team instead of just running,” Patrick said. “As kids we were always comparing ourselves to one another. It would definitely add a lot more excitement if we were able to race one another.”

If the triplets were able to compete against one another Patrick firmly believes that he would come across the finish line first without a doubt. Coach Avery agrees with him.

“Patrick is by far the fastest of the three. Sarah and David use to be close, but I think David has now surpassed her,” the Clocker Coach said of her junior runners. “The two boys have never had the opportunity to run against one another as they are needed to pick up points in different events

The thought of having all three siblings running in the same event has seemed to intrigue the Coach.

“The boys have run together as part of the 4x400 relay but never have all three been able to compete in the same race,” Avery said. “I we ever have a co-ed relay then I’ll have to get all three of them together to take part in the race. They are a fun group of kids and I am happy that they are coming into their own.”

Ashland is looking to put forth a successful track and field season with the Ezeh’s as a main part of their success this season, but the biggest success to the season is having a season to compete in.

“After losing our entire sophomore year to Covid we were not even sure if there would be a season this year,” Patrick said. “It’s definitely exciting to be back participating as it was really boring with no sports for that entire time frame.”

No matter what event the Ezeh triplets happen to take part in this spring they are all overly happy not only happy to be taking part in the season but looking to help Ashland succeed.



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# A Taste of What's to Come at SALMON at Medway

## When Food Goes Beyond the Dining Room for Seniors

SALMON at Medway – the new 55+ community, opening this summer at 44 Willow Pond Circle – loves doing senior living ‘outside the box.’ Nothing about this combined active independent and assisted living facility has a been-there, done-that feel, especially true of the 57-acre campus’s dining program.

Passionately and creatively helmed by Director of Culinary & Dining Operations, Chef Jason Wallin, SALMON’s ‘Anytime Dining’ restaurant-style meal plans are enough to make any college student drool with envy.

“It’s not just about eating fresh, local and healthy”, says Wallin. “It’s about making dining more than a meal and truly making it a lifestyle. Our offerings will feed and nourish the body, mind and soul.”

Residents will have tough decisions to make when it comes to eating as they will find many choices available anytime of day, including fresh, locally sourced Mediterranean and plant-based options designed with input from on-site nutritionist Sarah Clarke.

Speaking of local, let’s talk about SALMON’s partnership with Medway Community Farms. Not only is the farm providing 20-30% of all produce at the community and helping tend to the on-site hydroponic garden, they and SALMON will host

on-campus farmers markets open to the public all summer long.

And the sweetest little ‘extra’? A collaboration with Best Bees of Boston making SALMON at Medway the only senior living community in New England to boast on-site beekeeping. Residents can immerse themselves in education, experience and fresh honey drizzled on top of anything they want.

As a family-owned business, Wallin, SALMON CEO, Matt Salmon and their team are committed to making the community feel like ‘home’ for seniors’ family and friends, too. “Our campus is an open, inviting place where people want to be”, says Wallin. “Every element is thoughtfully planned to maximize the health, well-being and happiness of our residents and their extended social circles.”

Included among the family-friendly dining and entertainment: a game room for grandkids to hang featuring a more kid-focused menu; a casual café with grab-and-go items for in-room entertaining; and cooking classes hosted by Wallin.

When it comes to the menu and lifestyle at SALMON at Medway, there hasn’t been a detail overlooked and the community is excited to open its doors to residents and the local community. Check them out at [www.medwayseniorliving.com](http://www.medwayseniorliving.com) or on Instagram, Facebook and TikTok @SalmonatMedway.

# Statement from Senate President Karen E. Spilka on Chauvin Trial Verdict

The verdict reached in the Derek Chauvin trial has brought relief to many of us, and a glimpse of hope for more accountability, and ultimately, justice. This evening, I am thinking of George Floyd, the many friends and family who loved him, and the pain of their irreparable loss. I am also deeply grateful for the courage of the witnesses who testified against Chauvin, as well as the countless individuals who persisted in protesting for accountability over the past year.

Last year, we began the long process of answering calls for change by passing nation-leading legislation to improve equity, transparency, and accountability in policing in Massachusetts. I am proud of this accomplishment, but I am determined to do more. I will continue to call on the Massachusetts State Senate to be intentional in our policy-



making, and view all legislation through the lens of racial justice in order to break down the systemic barriers that have unfairly burdened generations of Black and brown people. As Senate President, I am personally committed to the hard work that will be required of all of us to make our Commonwealth a more equitable and just place.

## ACT is Back

We are thrilled to resume theater activities with all new original material!

### The Viewing Room

Sept 23-24-25 and Oct 1-2, 2021 at Marconi’s Theater at the

VFW in Ashland

DIRECTED BY JOE WHITE  
WRITTEN BY MARK SMITH

Starring - Will Annand, Tom Astore, Melanie Blodgett-O’Toole, Randy Divinski, Larry

Loring, Lida McGirr, David Mularski and Lynda Slocomb.

### “The Viewing Room”

The show is an original comedic play about the death and life of Chester Dumbrosky. “The Viewing Room” takes place in January of 2005 at the Hollerbach Funeral Home at the wake of Chester Dumbrosky, patriarch of the Dumbrosky family. The play is about family interactions and the interpersonal relationships we all have or want to have with our families. While every family dynamic is different each one of us plays a role within that dynamic. We guarantee you will see some similarities to a family that you know. Perhaps even your own.

The Viewing Room is ACT’s 13th production and our sixth at Marconi’s Theater at the Ashland VFW.

Grab a friend, get your tickets, and join us at the Ashland VFW for a great evening. We promise to make you laugh and maybe even cry a bit!

**What:** The Viewing Room

**Dates:** Sept 23-24-25 and Oct 1-2

**Time:** 7:30 PM

**Where:** Ashland VFW, 311 Pleasant St., Ashland, MA

**Tickets:** \$15

**Buy Tickets:** Information Coming Soon; there will be both In-Person and Streaming Opportunities

### ACT Short Film

ACT has been working on a film over these last 7 months.

Joe White is directing a short film called

### “Friends in Black and White”

screenplay adapted from a Tom Astro play.

Starring - Jerry Halfhide and Larry Loring.

More information about the premiere and streaming options will come in future communications.

## The Viewing Room

An Original Play by Mark Smith



### ACT Holiday Show Dec 2021

#### “Dashing Through the Snow”

DIRECTED BY JULIE MURPHY.

**Dates:** Dec 16-17-18

**Time:** 7:30 PM

**Where:** Ashland VFW, 311 Pleasant St., Ashland, MA

**Tickets:** \$15

Information Coming Soon; there will be both In-Person and Streaming Opportunities




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# Real Estate Corner

## Are We In a Housing Bubble?

BY JEN PARATORE, REALTOR

The 2021 real estate market has been red hot. Low interest rates coupled with a historically low number of homes for sale has created an ultra-competitive seller's market. Homes are receiving multiple offers, oftentimes selling significantly over asking-price with buyers waiving contingencies to ensure their offer comes out on top. This fevered market seems unsustainable in the long run and has many people wondering if the housing market is ready to burst.

So, are we in a housing bubble? In short, no. Stricter lending practices over the past few years have ensured more qualified buy-

ers and stronger underwriting on mortgages. A decade of stable housing market conditions has also allowed homeowners to build up more equity, ensuring less people are underwater on their mortgage. We are also not seeing a high number of foreclosed homes hit the market all at once as a result of the pandemic. The pandemic mortgage forbearance programs have allowed some homeowners to postpone mortgage payments without penalties to help them get back on track. Foreclosures over the next few years will unfortunately increase but the number should be significantly less than the housing crisis of 2007.

The predictions for the rest of 2021 market are optimistic. Home prices should continue to rise this year with demand remaining strong. However, as the mortgage rates continue to rise and more buyers take a seat on the sidelines, the market should naturally balance itself out to a variation of seasonal supply and demand that we are used to seeing. As the market corrects itself, home prices may eventually experience a dip but nothing like the crash we saw 15 years ago.

Jen owns Cordaville Realty in Ashland  
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Jen Paratore, Realtor

Broker/Owner  
Ashland Resident

Our real estate team is dedicated to giving back to our community here in Ashland. For every home we sell in Ashland this year, a portion of our proceeds will be donated to local non-profits that directly benefit our amazing town.

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