

STURBRIDGE VILLAGER

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Thursday-Friday, August 13-14, 2026

Historic infant formula donation distributed to local nonprofits

Multiple Southbridge agencies among recipients

SOUTHBIDGE — In July, Worcester County Sheriff Lew Evangelidis, the Worcester County Sheriff's Office, and

Reserve Deputy Sheriff's Association (WCRDSA), the Worcester County Sheriff's Office, and

Wales Community Pantry announces first-ever fundraising golf tournament

FISKDALE — The Wales Community Pantry today announced its first annual fundraising golf tournament, inviting the community to swing for a cause that hits close to home. The event will take place on Saturday, Oct. 3, with a 9 a.m. start at Hemlock Ridge Golf Course in Fiskdale.

This is more than a day on the course. It is a chance to stand with neighbors and families who face the stress of not knowing whether there will be enough food for dinner. Or breakfast. In just the past two years, the number of people the pantry serves has roughly tripled. Hundreds of families across Brimfield, Holland, Wales, and more than 20 surrounding communities now rely on the pantry for nutritious food provided with dignity. The pantry also sends weekend food home with 85 elementary students through its Backpack Program and delivers to more than 40 homebound neighbors.

In the immediate area there are no grocery stores and limited public transportation, making the pantry a critical lifeline. Rising costs of food, housing, and healthcare continue to push more households to seek help. The tournament will feature food, prizes, and the chance to make a tangible difference.

"Golf is fun, but this day is about something bigger," said Dave Sweeney, Executive Director of the Wales Community Pantry. "Every player, sponsor, and volunteer helps us keep food on the shelves for families who need it. We're grateful for the community's support and excited to grow this event into an annual tradition."

Event Details

- Date & Time: Saturday, Oct. 3, 9 a.m. start
- Location: Hemlock Ridge Golf Course, Fiskdale
- Includes: Golf, food, and prizes
- Registration: <https://bit.ly/WalesGolfFundraiser>
- Sponsorships: Available at multiple levels. Contact WalesCommunityFoodPantry@gmail.com or visit the golf tournament registration page for more details.

Players, sponsors, and volunteers are encouraged to sign up early. Sponsorship opportunities offer visibility while directly supporting the pantry's mission. For more information or to discuss sponsorship, email WalesCommunityFoodPantry@gmail.com or visit the golf tournament registration page for more details.

About the Wales Community Pantry

The Wales Community Pantry provides nutritious food with dignity to families, seniors, veterans, people with disabilities, working households, and children in Brimfield, Holland, Wales, and surrounding communities in western Massachusetts. Through open pantry hours, home delivery, and a Weekend Backpack Program, the pantry serves as a vital resource in an area with limited access to grocery stores. For more information, visit the pantry's Facebook page or email WalesCommunityFoodPantry@gmail.com.



Courtesy Photo



Courtesy Photo

Worcester County Sheriff Lew Evangelidis and WCSO Staff visited Southbridge Food Share to donate multiple cases of infant formula.

Worcester County Sheriff Lew Evangelidis visits Pastor Esteban Carrasco Jr., President and Executive Director of the Bridge of Faith Youth Center, to deliver cases of infant formula. Ocean State Job Lot (OSJL) distributed a historic \$250,000 worth of infant formula to food pantries, women's shelters, and nonprofit organizations serving families throughout Worcester County.

The donation was made

Turn To **DONATION** page **A10**

Applications welcome for Southbridge Cultural Council grants

SOUTHBIDGE — The Southbridge Cultural Council announces that applications for the 2027 grant funding cycle will become available only online to www.massculturalcouncil.org.

The official submission cycle for 2027 begins on Sept. 1, and ends on Oct. 15 at 11.59 p.m. No applications

are accepted after the official deadline established by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, Boston. Officially required is that all 2027 applicants review and understand the Massachusetts Cultural Council and the Southbridge Cultural Council specific criteria online before submission of the grant application.

The Southbridge Cultural Council (SCC), a local agency, is part of the overall grant program of the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC), a state agency, providing grant allocations to each of the 351 cities and towns of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in support of cultural activi-

ties in their respective areas. The Massachusetts Cultural Council is funded by the Massachusetts Legislature and the National Endowment for the Arts.

For questions of the 2027 grant cycle, please call Michelle LeBoeuf, SCC Chairperson at 508-764-4803 or Ted Bartlett, SCC Treasurer at 508-764-7909.

Hitchcock hosts series of Saturday night sound therapy sessions

BRIMFIELD — In partnership with Healing Hands for Body & Mind and Health Well Crafted, both in Palmer, Hitchcock will present a series of sound therapy sessions on Saturday evenings. The sessions will take place from 6 to 7:30 p.m. on select evenings. Each session is offered for \$20 per person.

The dates for the sessions are as follows:

- Aug. 22 | Stability & Balance
- Sept. 19 | Stress Management
- Oct. 17 | Immune Defense
- Nov. 14 | Life Challenges, Loss, & Grief

Sound therapy utilizes aspects of music, tones, and notes to improve one's physical, emotional, and mental health. Healing with sound dates back to ancient Greece when it was used to treat mental disorders. Throughout history, music has been used in many ways — to boost morale, promote productivity, and support healing. The healing powers of sound are vast and mostly untapped in today's society.

Recent research has linked sound and music to a num-



ber of health benefits, including boosting immune function, lowering stress levels, and improving the health of premature babies.

For the Stability & Balance session on Aug. 22, specially formatted vibrational sounds will support the systems of the body and their relationships, including emotional as well as physical stability and structural issues. This session will promote balance

of the energetic circulation of the body.

The September 19th session will focus on stress management.

"All living things experience stress. The goal is not to eliminate stress but to mitigate its effects on our physical and mental wellness," says session facilitator Alora Heffernan. "Without proper management, stress can lead to imbalances and produces

opportunities where diseases can develop."

This therapy's sequence of tones reduces the impact of stress on the body. The session helps the body decompress and fosters a sense of well-being.

Well timed for flu season, the Oct. 17 session will focus on immune defense.

"The immune system is a complex network of organs, cells and proteins that defend

the body while protecting the body's own cells," say facilitators Pat & Ken Wheelock. "This system defends us from invading microbes and supports overall disease resistance from more chronic illnesses such as cancer. Stressors, such as lifestyle, medications, and environment can destabilize the system, causing imbalances and reducing its ability to protect the body."

This specially chosen pattern of vibrations and tones supports the foundational strength of the Immune System. Restore the integrity of the vital functions of our defense system with this sound therapy.

On Nov. 14, a session focused on Life Challenges, Loss, & Grief. This therapy uses specific vibrational patterns and tones to soothe and nourish both the organs and nervous system in the processing of our emotions, thus providing support through high impact stress experiences.

Pat & Ken Wheelock are multi-trained bodywork practitioners based in Three Rivers, Massachusetts. Their

practice spans acupressure, Reiki, herbal studies, sound therapy, color therapy, and aromatherapy — a rich, holistic toolkit built through years of dedicated study and hands-on experience. Certified practitioners since 2008, the Wheelocks have spent over 15 years studying, practicing, and teaching the healing arts.

Alora Heffernan is a certified Reiki Master and Certified Meditation Teacher providing intuitive energy work. This includes non-invasive modalities such as Guided Meditation, Reiki, and Sound Therapy to promote energy alignment, relaxation, and general well-being.

Some seating will be available; students are encouraged to bring a yoga mat or folding camp chair to be comfortable.

For more information, visit www.hitchcockacademy.org. Hitchcock Academy is a community center located at 2 Brookfield Rd. in Brimfield, serving the community with educational, recreational, and cultural programming.

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REAL ESTATE

Charlton
\$650,000, 97 Carroll Hill Rd, Sargis Jr, Robert S, and Sargis, Krystal L, to Maschal, James, and Maschal, Bridgette.

\$616,500, 93 Haggerty Rd, Montville, Patricia, and Montville, Richard, to Xavier, Mayker Y-Pires.

\$360,000, 132 Nugget Dr, Ashe, Michael Steven, and Normandin, Kelly Rose, to Dingman, Elissa K.

\$310,000, 35 Nashoba Rd, Roberts, Corey, and Roberts, Janice M, to Smith, Sadie B, and Schultz, Benjamin.

\$85,000, Jennings Rd #55, Gair LLC, to Rob Judson Contracting In.

SOUTHBRIDGE

\$459,000, 14 Servant Way, Cote, Christine M, to Morales, Richie, and Graciolett-Lozada, Paula.

\$430,000, 20 Quail Run, Aponte Jr, Antonio, and Pelaez, Iris Gabriela, to Jacques, Corey, and Jacques, Rebecca.

\$404,000, 584 Dennison Dr, Adorno, David, and

Adorno, Crystal, to Marrero, Jorge Luis, and Rodriguez, Marianna Paola.

\$225,000, 384 Main St, Protection Ft, and Cournoyer Jr, Donald C, to Medero, Jose L.

\$210,000, 775 Dennison Dr, Rmf Buyout Acqui T 2020-H, and Wilmington Svgs Fund Soc, to Tavarez, Domingo, and Tavarez, Minerva.

STURBRIDGE

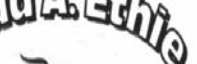
\$655,555, 174 Cedar St, Curbelo, Raul H, and Curbelo, Pamela J, to Hersey, Michael, and Hersey, Caitlin.

\$638,000, 66 Allen Rd, Linden, Shawn E, and Linden, Brandi L, to Vaudreuil, Rebecca.

\$559,000, 37 Woodlawn Dr, Lisowski, Jacob, and Decarr, Alexa, to Mcmath, Jonathan C.

\$435,000, 46 Willard Rd, Folkes, Matthew, and Malizia, Julia, to Aritan, Maria.

\$357,000, 20 Jamieson Rd, Bartlett, Jacquelyn E, and Bartlett, Jordan M, to Gallien, Tricia.



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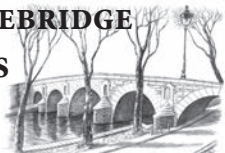
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Shepherd Hill students hosting Tackle the Stigma 5K to promote mental health awareness

CHARLTON — The Shepherd Hill Regional High School cheer-leading program, in partnership with the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District community, is inviting residents to lace up their running shoes and help break down barriers surrounding mental health during the annual Tackle the Stigma 5K and 2.5K Walk/Run on Saturday, Sept. 27.

The event will begin at 10 a.m. at the Shepherd Hill football field and is designed to raise awareness about mental health and mental wellness while encouraging open conversations throughout the local community.

Organizers hope participants of all ages will come together to demonstrate support for those facing mental health challenges and reinforce the message that no one has to struggle alone.

"This event is very important to us as we work to raise awareness about mental health and mental wellness throughout our local community," organizers said in announcing the event.

The walk and run carries the theme, "Run toward awareness, stand up for support, and tackle the stigma one mile at a time," reflecting its focus on education, compassion and community involvement.

Mental health advocates continue to emphasize the importance of reducing the stigma surrounding anxiety, depression and other mental health conditions, which can often prevent individuals from seeking help. Community events such as Tackle the Stigma aim to create a welcoming environment where conversations about mental wellness are encouraged and support resources are highlighted.

In addition to providing an opportunity for exercise and community engagement, the event serves as a reminder that mental health is an important part of overall well-being. Organizers hope the day will inspire participants to check in with friends, family members and neighbors while promoting a culture of understanding and acceptance.

The Shepherd Hill cheerleaders have made mental health awareness a priority, using the event to unite students, families, educators and community members around a common cause. By bringing together participants from across Dudley, Charlton and surrounding communities, they hope to build momentum for ongoing conversations that extend well beyond race day.

Whether participants choose the full 5-kilometer course or the shorter 2.5-kilometer walk/run, organizers say every step represents a commitment to supporting mental wellness and reminding those who may be struggling that help is available.

Registration information and additional event details are expected to be available through Shepherd Hill Regional High School and the Dudley-Charlton District as the Regional School event approaches.

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Drought conditions prompt water restrictions

SOUTHBRIDGE / CHARLTON — The Massachusetts Drought Task for issues a Level -2 Significant Drought status for Worcester County. The Town of Southbridge now has to require that all Southbridge and Charlton water customers refrain from all outside water use except for handheld watering between the hours of 5 and 9 p.m. Please turn off all outside sprinkler systems.

This declaration from the State also applies to homes with private wells.

Certain water uses are not subject to restrictions such as production of food and fiber, health and safety reasons, maintenance of livestock, and core functions of a business (for example irrigation for a nursery).

For the general public's information, Currently the Southbridge Water Departments reservoir system is at 100.1 percent of total capacity. This is within our historical average for this time of year.

The declaration is a county wide declaration, and not due to any current water storage shortfalls within the Southbridge Water Department. This declaration is part of new laws and regulations put forth by the State legislature, and enforcement went into effect in April of 2025.

To be clear, the Southbridge Water department is not experiencing any water storage shortages currently.

The declaration of Level- 2 significant drought will remain in effect until the State Drought Task Force deems that the conditions within Worcester County have returned to acceptable levels.

More information can be found at <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/drought-management-task-force>

Please feel free to contact the Southbridge Water Department at 508-764-3207 if you have any questions or concerns.

**TOWN OF POMFRET
PART-TIME ASSISTANT TREASURER**

The Town of Pomfret seeks to hire a PT Assistant Treasurer. Responsibilities include receipt and deposit of town funds, reconciliation of accounts, processing purchase orders and invoices for disbursement, transfer of funds and entry of expenses into town's accounting system, and perform any and all duties as may be required with this position and as required under CT General Statutes. Work in cooperation with municipal officials and provides financial reports as needed. Must be able to work independently. Flexible work hours. Offices closed on Fridays. Knowledge of Tyler Infinite Vision Accounting Software preferred. Five years of related experience in accounting/bookkeeping, municipal work is a plus. Salary dependent upon qualifications and experience. Interested persons should forward resume/application and three references to the Selectman's Office, 5 Haven Road, Pomfret Center, CT 06259 or email Selectmansclerk@pomfretct.gov on or before August 31, 2026. Application and full job description is available at www.pomfretct.gov/first-selectmans-office. EEO/AA

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Troop 163 hosting ice cream social & open house

STURBRIDGE — Do you like camping, hiking, swimming, biking, fishing, kayaking, white-water rafting, sailing, exploring with friends, and more? You might like being a scout! Come to an ice cream social and open house held by Troop 163, an all-girl troop of Scouting America.

Learn about lassoing and how to use a sling shot, and other activities. Families are welcome. Please stop by, have fun, and learn about scouting and our troop.

The ice cream social and open house will be held on Sunday, Aug. 30 from 4 to 6 p.m. at the Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 345 Main St. in Sturbridge. The troop is open to girls aged 11-17, and while based in Sturbridge, is open to residents of any town. Please email troop-163sturbridge@gmail.com with any questions.

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Saturday, August 22 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Town Clerk's Office, 37 Main St.
You can also register online or through the mail. 5 PM is the deadline.

Early Voting In person
Town Hall – Town Clerk's Office
37 Main Street, Charlton

Sat. Aug. 22	9:00am-5:00pm
Mon. Aug. 24	8:00am-5:00pm
Tues. Aug. 25	8:00am-7:00pm
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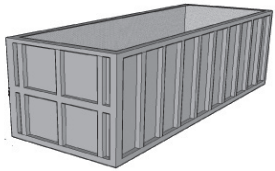
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FRANK G. CHILINSKI
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EDITOR

When a big donation reaches local families

A quarter-million-dollar donation is an impressive number. Nearly 10,000 cans of infant formula is an impressive number. The equivalent of 440,000 bottles is an impressive number.

But the real measure of the infant formula distribution organized through the Worcester County Reserve Deputy Sheriff’s Association, Worcester County Sheriff’s Office and Ocean State Job Lot comes when those numbers are reduced to something much smaller: one family that needs help feeding a baby.

For families struggling with the cost of groceries, housing, utilities and other necessities, infant formula can represent a substantial expense that cannot simply be postponed until the household budget improves. Babies need to be fed today.

That is why it is encouraging to see Southbridge organizations among those receiving formula through this countywide effort. Southbridge Food Share and the Bridge of Faith Youth Center were among the organizations participating in the July 28 distribution from the Worcester County Jail and House of Correction, while Bridge of Faith also was identified among organizations receiving additional donations.

The distribution demonstrates something important about charitable work. Generosity matters, but so does infrastructure.

Ocean State Job Lot and its customers helped provide the formula through the company’s “Buy, Give, Get” Baby Formula Program. The Worcester County Reserve Deputy Sheriff’s Association and Sheriff’s Office helped move an enormous quantity of formula into the community. Local food pantries and nonprofit organizations then provided the final and perhaps most important connection, getting that assistance closer to the families who need it.

Each part of that chain matters. A donation sitting in a warehouse does little good. A community organization with willing volunteers can accomplish only so much without supplies. A family in need may not know where to turn unless trusted local organizations are already present and accessible.

When those pieces come together, however, a large corporate charitable program becomes something tangible in places such as Southbridge.

There is another worthwhile lesson here. Effective community partnerships do not always need to be created from scratch when a crisis arises.

Sheriff Lew Evangelidis noted that the relationship with Ocean State Job Lot began with an annual winter coat drive and expanded over time to include food, toys and back-to-school supplies. Now infant formula has been added to that list.

That is how strong partnerships are supposed to work. Organizations learn what each can contribute, establish trust and build the ability to respond when another need emerges.

The same principle applies at the local level. Food pantries, churches, youth organizations, municipal agencies, businesses and residents all occupy different corners of community life. None can solve every problem alone. But when those organizations know one another and maintain working relationships, resources can travel much more efficiently from those who have something to give to those who need it.

The scale of this particular donation deserves recognition. It was the largest in-kind donation ever received by the Worcester County Reserve Deputy Sheriff’s Association.

Yet its greatest value will never be adequately expressed by the \$250,000 figure attached to it.

Its value will be found in cupboards and kitchens throughout Worcester County. It will be found when a parent who was worried about buying the next can of formula receives some breathing room. It will be found when a local nonprofit can say yes instead of telling a family that supplies have run out.

Countywide partnerships can sometimes seem distant from everyday life in an individual town. This one is not.

Some of those 10,000 cans are coming to Southbridge, through organizations already serving Southbridge families. That is a large act of generosity becoming local help, one family and one bottle at a time.

Letter submission policy

Letters to the Editor must include the author’s name, address, and a daytime phone number for purposes of verification in order to be considered for publication. Only the author’s name and the town in which they reside will be published. Letters submitted without all of the required information will not be accepted.

It is the sole prerogative of the Editor to determine whether a submission satisfies our requirements and decency standards, and any submission may be rejected at any time for any reason he or she might deem appropriate.

OPINION

Four reasons a 529 plan might make sense for your family

Key takeaways

- Despite their tax advantages, just 14 percent of adults include a 529 plan in their education savings strategy, according to a 2025 Edward Jones and Morning Consult study.
- 529 funds cover college, vocational programs, registered apprenticeships and can be used towards K-12 education.
- In addition to tuition, 529 funds can pay for students' day-to-day needs like internet, computers, qualified room and board, and certain K-12 tutoring costs.

A 529 education savings plan might sound like something only families with college-bound kids need. But the versatility of a 529 account may surprise you, whether your child heads to a four-year university, a trade school or elsewhere.



FINANCIAL
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NIELSEN

3. What does a 529 plan cover beyond tuition?

Qualified costs for 529 plan withdrawals include books, supplies, computers, internet access and educational software. For students enrolled at least half time, room and board also qualify, including off-campus housing up to what the school sets as its cost of attendance.

Recent changes in the law expanded 529 plan qualified expenses. Some new eligible expenses include certain testing fees, instructional materials, academic tutoring, and educational therapies for students with disabilities.

For K-12, you can use up to \$20,000 from your 529 account per year for tuition, certain tutoring, and curriculum materials.

1. What are the tax benefits of a 529 education savings plan?

Earnings in a 529 plan grow free from federal taxes, and withdrawals used for qualified education expenses are also federally tax-free. While 529 contributions are not federally deductible, many states allow a deduction on your state return.

Despite their tax advantages, just 14% of adults include a 529 plan in their education savings strategy, according to a 2025 Edward Jones and Morning Consult study. Instead, most families rely on traditional personal savings accounts.

2. Can a 529 be used if my child doesn't attend a traditional college?

Beyond four-year colleges, you can use 529 funds for community colleges, graduate schools, and vocational programs. Apprenticeships in fields like plumbing, electrical work and welding qualify too, provided they are registered with the U.S. Department of Labor.

If your child earns a scholarship, you can withdraw up to that amount from your 529 account without penalty, though earnings may still be taxable.

4. What if I don't use all the money in my 529 account?

If one child doesn't need the 529 funds, you can transfer that account to a sibling, another qualifying family member or even yourself. You can also use 529 funds to pay up to \$10,000 in student loans, roll them into a Roth IRA for the beneficiary up to \$35,000 (subject to certain limits and criteria) or roll them into a disability savings account (ABLE account) for the beneficiary or a family member.

With so many options for investing, withdrawals and redirecting the money, a 529 plan is one of the more flexible tools available for families thinking about education costs. A financial advisor can walk you through the details and help you choose a plan that fits your overall financial strategy.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Please contact Trevor Nielsen, your local Edward Jones Advisor in Sturbridge at 508-347-1420 or trevor.nielsen@edwardjones.com. Edward Jones, Member SIPC

Edward Jones, its employees and financial advisors cannot provide tax or legal advice. You should consult your attorney or qualified tax advisor regarding your situation.

When everything started beeping

LANTERNS ALONG MAIN STREET

By CHARLES

I miss appliances that knew their place. The toaster toasted. The washing machine washed. The refrigerator kept things cold. None of them had anything to say about it.

Somewhere along the way, however, the appliances in our lives discovered communication. Now everything beeps.

Our washing machine beeps when it starts. It beeps when it finishes. It beeps when I push the wrong button. Sometimes it beeps for reasons that remain between the washing machine and its maker.

The microwave may be the worst offender. When my childhood microwave finished heating something, it rang a bell. One ding. Message received.

The modern microwave apparently believes that unless I retrieve my coffee immediately, civilization may collapse. Beep. A little while later, another beep. Then another. Yes, microwave. I know. I put the coffee in there.

There is something mildly irritating about being nagged by an appliance you purchased. It isn't only the noise. Everything now has settings. Our old washing machine had a knob. You turned it. The machine started. That was essentially the entire relationship.

Today's machines have buttons for temperature, soil level, spin speed and enough specialized cycles to make me wonder whether I've been washing clothes incorrectly for 50 years. Normal. Heavy duty. Delicate. Quick wash. Bedding. Towels. Whites. Apparently, towels have needs.

I recently stood in front of the washing machine holding a perfectly ordinary pile of clothes and realized I was being asked to make more decisions than I wanted to make before breakfast.

I selected “normal.” I select “normal” for almost everything. Normal has gotten me this far.

Our television is another matter entirely. There was a time when televisions had an on-off switch and a channel knob. If the picture wasn't good, you adjusted the antenna. If that didn't work, somebody stood beside the television holding the antenna.

This was our first wireless technology.

Now the television has several remotes, numerous menus and an occasional habit of announcing that it cannot find something called an “input.” Neither can I.

I have learned that when the television stops working, the safest strategy is to avoid touching anything. The temptation is to start pushing buttons. This is how a minor television problem becomes an evening project.

One wrong selection and suddenly the screen is displaying a menu last seen by the engineer who designed the television. My wife will eventually ask what I did. “Nothing.” This is rarely true.

Technology has improved our homes in countless ways, of course. Modern appliances are more efficient, more capable and often safer than what we grew up with. But I sometimes wonder whether every object really needs to be quite so clever.

I don't need my refrigerator to connect to the Internet. I don't need an app for my light bulbs. I certainly don't need my dishwasher sending notifications. There are already enough people and organizations trying to contact me. I don't need to hear from the dishwasher.

Maybe this is simply what getting older looks like. Every generation eventually encounters technology that makes it wonder why the old way wasn't good enough. My grandparents probably said the same thing about automatic transmissions. Still, I think there should be a market for appliances designed specifically for people like me. One button. It would be large. The instructions would read: “Push this.”

And when the appliance finished doing whatever it was supposed to do, it wouldn't send a notification, connect to Wi-Fi or play a cheerful little melody. It would simply stop. If I wanted to know whether it was finished, I could walk over and look. I still remember how to do that.

Ruth Wells Center spotlights life and work of Michel Merle

SOUTHBRIDGE — The Ruth Wells Center for the Arts, 111 Main St. in Southbridge, is excited to present a retrospective of the life and works of Michel Merle. The galleries will be open throughout the month Saturday and Sunday noon to 4 p.m. Please join us to celebrate his works, meet the artist and share refreshments in this historic setting. All are welcome.

The artwork of Michel Duncan Merle serves as a vibrant and provocative crossroads where legendary artistic heritage meets decades of technical mastery.

A native Parisian born in 1937, Merle spent more than three decades as a Professor of Art at Worcester State University in Worcester, Massachusetts, where he taught generations of students to view creation through an alternative or philosophical lens.

Artistic practice and innovation run deep-

ly in his veins: Merle is the son of artist and gallery owner, Ligoa Duncan, the grandson of artist and philosopher Raymond Duncan, and the great-nephew of modern dance pioneer and virtuoso Isadora Duncan. Merle's extensive studies, from the Akademia Raymond Duncan in Paris to the Instituto Allende in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, where he earned an MFA in Sculpture and Painting, reflects a global, lifelong commitment to the avant-garde.

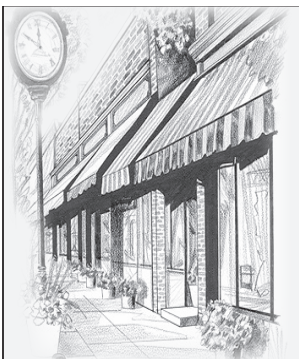
Merle has participated in a myriad of artistic organizations and collaborations over the years, including: Grove Street Gallery (co-founder/co-curator); Noh Place Artists Cooperative (board of directors/performer); Forbidden Poets (piano/spoken word); WCUW 91.3 FM (radio show featuring The Stranger and Think Tank Tango); Worcester County Poetry Association (for-



mer president); and a variety of performances and contributions as a member of Worcester Artist Group, Invented Thing Quartet, Theater Now, and Kasner Gooch Multimedia.

Merle is also the author of a volume of cut-up poems, "Glass Bedding" (North American Editions) and continues to produce poems/art in this fashion. More recently, he produced collages in response to a series of René Magritte-inspired poems by Stephen Campiglio, as part of a multimedia manuscript, including the work of two other artists, Andres Juarez and Jennifer Forest, entitled "Other Turns."

The Ruth Wells Art Center exhibition invites viewers to experience a brilliant collection that honors Michel's family's historic legacy, while celebrating his own distinct, thought-provoking aesthetic.



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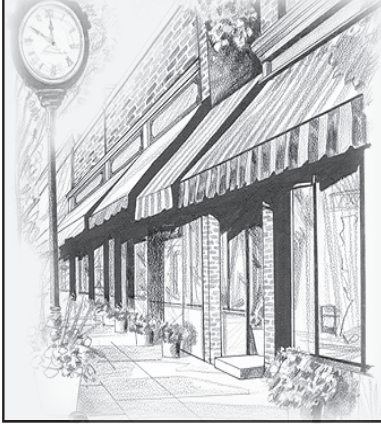
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Community Connection



For more information, visit www.hitchcock-academy.org. Hitchcock Academy is a community center located at 2 Brookfield Rd. in Brimfield serving the community with educational, recreational, and cultural programming.

366 E. Main Street, Rte. 9, East Brookfield

Annual Zucchini Festival returns to Holland Aug. 16

HOLLAND — The Friends of the Holland Community Center will once again host their Annual Zucchini Festival at the Holland Community Center at 40 Brimfield Rd. in Holland. The event will take place on Sunday, Aug. 16 from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. Admission is free, and there is something for everyone to enjoy.

We will have a bake sale, raffle table, a “spin the wheel” for prizes for the kiddos, a zucchini “cook off” contest, and a foam machine for kids and adults alike to run through to cool off.

The Holland Fire Department will once again be on hand (unless they are called away) with at least one of their fire trucks to check out, and our giant chess set and cornhole will be set up if you wish to use them.

Scout Troop #163 will be selling hot dogs and drinks, and Angry Panda and O’Neil’s Lemonade



St. Anne – St. Patrick Parish introduces family-friendly schedule for 2026–2027 Faith Formation program



FIKSDALE — St. Anne–St. Patrick Parish is making it easier for families to participate in both Faith Formation and Sunday Mass with a newly redesigned class schedule for the 2026–2027 program year. By intentionally centering its Faith Formation schedule around the 10:00 a.m. Sunday Mass, the parish hopes families can more easily worship together while also having more time back in their Sundays.

“At St. Anne – St. Patrick Parish, we want to remove obstacles that make it difficult for families to practice their faith together,” said Fr. Salvator Musande, Pastor of St. Anne – St. Patrick Parish. “Our new schedule allows children to grow in their knowledge and understanding of the Catholic Faith while making Sunday Mass something families can attend together.

will also be on site. Visitors can browse plenty of booths inside and outside, where both new and returning vendors will offer jewelry, local honey, and homemade items of every kind imaginable.

It will be a great opportunity for you to bring your redeemable bottles and cans to drop off in our bin to the left of the building.

There is something for everyone, so we hope you will join us for this family friendly fun-filled afternoon. For more information, please call the Center at 413-245-3163 or email us at friendsofholland@gmail.com.

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LEGALS

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In accordance with Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 200A, Section 9A, the Treasurer of the Town of Sturbridge is providing public notice of names of persons appearing to be owners of funds held by the Town and deemed abandoned. Unclaimed/Abandoned property within the Treasury of the Town pertains to uncashed payroll and/or accounts payable checks. Inquires should be made within 60 days. Claim forms can be found at: https://www.sturbridge.gov/finance-department/pages/unclaimed-abandoned-property-tailings

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August 14, 2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Worcester Probate and Family Court
225 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01608
(508) 831-2200
Docket No. WO26P2501 EA
CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION
Estate Of:
Charles R Burrows
Date of Death: 11/20/2004

To all interested persons:
A Petition for **Formal Adjudication of Intestacy and Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Rosalie J Carter of Jesup GA** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition. The Petitioner requests that: .
Rosalie J Carter of Jesup GA be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **With Personal Surety** on the estate in **unsupervised administration**.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 09/01/2026**.

This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)
A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.
WITNESS, Hon. Kathryn M. Bailey, First Justice of this Court.
Date: August 04, 2026
Stephanie Fattman,
Register of Probate
August 13, 2026

CHARLTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE
In accordance with the Town of Charlton Stormwater Management Rules & Regulations, the Charlton Conservation Commission will be accepting comments on the following application:
The applicant, N & K Builders LLC, has submitted two Land Disturbance/Stormwater Management Applications on July 21, 2026, for land disturbance associated with the construction of a single-family home and site work. The project sites are located at Lot 2

Daniels Road and Lot 3 Daniels Road, Charlton, MA 01507, and are also known as: Parcel IDs: 82-B-5 & 82-B-6
Copies of the Land Disturbance Application are available at the Charlton Conservation Commission office during business hours.
Thomas O'Malley
Chair, Charlton Conservation Commission
August 13, 2026

CHARLTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE
In accordance with the Wetland Protection Act of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Chapter 131, Section 40, the Charlton Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing on August 19, at 7PM on the application of Phil Millette. The applicant has filed a Notice of Intent for an existing concrete patio to be replaced with pavers within the 100-ft buffer zone to Pierpont Meadow Pond. The project location is: 70 Beach Road, Charlton, MA 01507. Parcel ID: 85A-B-20
Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, this meeting of the Charlton Conservation Commission will be conducted in person and via remote means. Members of the public who wish to participate can access the meeting remotely by request. Copies of the NOI may be examined at the Conservation Office by appointment during business hours.
Thomas O'Malley
Chair, Charlton Conservation Commission
August 13, 2026

TOWN OF SOUTHBRIDGE
TOWN COUNCIL
PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE
The Town of Southbridge Town Council will hold a Dangerous Dog Public Hearing on Monday, August 24, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. in the Town Council Chambers, 41 Elm Street, Southbridge, MA, in accordance with MGL, Chapter 140, Section 157, to hear a dangerous dog complaint against Alexander Woifel and to obtain an order with respect to the control or disposition of dogs found to be uncontrollable by their owner or keeper.
Anyone wishing to be heard should appear at the time and place designated.
August 13, 2026

Town of Brimfield Conservation Commission Public Hearing Notice
In accordance with the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, Chapter 131, Section 40, the Brimfield Conservation Commission will hold a public meeting on Wednesday, August 26, 2026, at 5:30 PM to review a Notice of Intent (NOI) submitted by Sherman & Frydryk, c/o David Warfield. The NOI proposes to build an addition to a single-family home.
Project Location: 41 Cubes Drive, Brimfield, MA 01010, (Assessor's Map (6A-A-8))
Meeting Location: Public Participation will be In-Person at Hitchcock Academy at 2 Brookfield Road, Brimfield, MA 01010 on August 26, 2026, at 5:30 PM. Any person(s) interested or wishing to be heard on this request should appear at the time and place designated. A copy of the permit application and plan may be inspected at the Brimfield Town Annex in the Conservation Commission Office, Salisbury Annex Building, 2nd Floor, 23 Main Street, Brimfield, MA 01010 or contact the office at 413-245-4100 ext. 1101.
Roger deBruyn & Joseph Venezia
Co-Chairs
August 05, 2026
August 13, 2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Worcester Probate and Family Court
225 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01608
Docket No. WO26P2475GD
CITATION GIVING NOTICE OF PETITION FOR APPOINTMENT OF GUARDIAN FOR INCAPACITATED PERSON PURSUANT TO G. L.c. 1908, § 5-304 & § 5-405
In the matter of:
Marcelle Marrier
Of: **Southbridge, MA**
RESPONDENT
Alleged Incapacitated Person
To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, a petition has been filed by

Department of Developmental Serv of Worcester, MA of Worcester, MA in the above captioned matter alleging that **Marcelle Marrier** is in need of a Guardian and requesting that **Kaleigh Kennedy of Holyoke, MA** (or some other suitable person) be appointed as Guardian to serve **Without Surety** on the bond.
The petition asks the court to determine that the Respondent is incapacitated, that the appointment of a Guardian is necessary, and that the proposed Guardian is appropriate. The petition is on file with this court.
You have the right to object to this proceeding. If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance at this court on or before 10:00 A.M. on the return date of **09/01/2026**. This day is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you have to file the written appearance if you object to the petition. If you fail to file the written appearance by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you. In addition to filing the written appearance, you or your attorney must file a written affidavit stating the specific facts and grounds of your objection within 30 days after the return date.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
The outcome of this proceeding may limit or completely take away the above-named person's right to make decisions about personal affairs or financial affairs or both. The above-named person has the right to ask for a lawyer. Anyone may make this request on behalf of the above-named person. If the above-named person cannot afford a lawyer, one may be appointed at State expense.
WITNESS, Hon. Kathryn M. Bailey, First Justice of this Court.
Date: August 03, 2026
Stephanie K. Fattman
Register of Probate
August 13, 2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Worcester Probate and Family Court
225 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01608
Docket No. WO00P005GR2
CITATION GIVING NOTICE OF PETITION FOR TERMINATION OF A GUARDIAN OF AN INCAPACITATED PERSON
In the matter of:
Marcelle Marrier of DOUGLAS, MA
RESPONDENT
Incapacitated Person/
Protected Person

To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, a petition has been filed by
Department of Developmental Service of Worcester MA in the above captioned matter and requesting that the court:
Terminate the Guardianship
The petition asks the court to make a determination that the Guardian and/or Conservator should be allowed to resign; or should be removed for good cause; or that the Guardianship and/or Conservatorship is no longer necessary and therefore should be terminated. The original petition is on file with the court.

You have the right to object to this proceeding. If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance at this court on or before 10:00 A.M. on the return date of **09/01/2026**. This day is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you have to file the written appearance if you object to the petition. If you fail to file the written appearance by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you. In addition to filing the written appearance, you or your attorney must file a written affidavit stating the specific facts and grounds of your objection within 30 days after the return date.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
The outcome of this proceeding may limit or completely take away the above-named person's right to make decisions about personal affairs or financial affairs or both. The above-named person has the right to ask for a lawyer. Anyone may make this request on behalf of the above-named person. If the above-named person cannot afford a lawyer, one may be appointed at State expense.
WITNESS, Hon. Kathryn M. Bailey, First Justice of this Court.
Date: August 03, 2026
Stephanie K. Fattman
Register of Probate
August 13, 2026, 2026

For Legal Advertising Information, Call 508-909-4127
email: legals@stonebridgepress.news

Badger & Nault coming to Jacob Edwards Library

SOUTHBRIDGE — The Jacob Edwards Library presents Badger & Nault live in concert on Thursday, Aug. 13, 6:30-7:30 p.m. This event is free and is open to the public.

Badger & Nault are an old-time acoustic duo based in central Massachusetts featuring banjo, accordion and vocal harmonies. Freddy Badger is an old-time banjo player, guitarist, and singer; in the American/Western European roots music tradition. While he is a native of Ashland, based on his musical style you could easily believe he is from somewhere in the Appalachian Mountains circa 1920.

Bridget Nault is an accordion player, guitarist and singer out of Worcester. She is a Berklee educated musician

who has appeared all over the state (and beyond) playing her original songs and performing solo and in different bands. Together this duo will play a selection of old-time and traditional songs spanning from the 16th century through the early 20th century, with a focus on the Scot, Irish and English music that was brought to Appalachia during that time period. Along with the music itself, Badger & Nault are passionate about the song histories, and will discuss the origins of the music they play throughout the performance.

This program is supported by a grant from the Southbridge Cultural Council, a local agency funded by Massachusetts Cultural Council a state agency.

OBITUARIES

Urban “Jerry” G. Bertrand, Jr, 89



Charlton/Sturbridge- Urban “Jerry” G. Bertrand, Jr, 89, died Tuesday, August 4, 2026, at the Overlook Masonic Health Center. His wife of 53 years Doris F. (Delage) Bertrand died in 2017.

A joint memorial service will be held on Friday, August 14, 2026.

He is survived by his sister Joanne Johnson of Alabama, and a nephew Scott Gagnon of Florida, and 2 nieces Tammy Johnson and Jennifer Rousseau, and many friends, including David and Rachel Sprague of Sturbridge..

Jerry was born in Southbridge, son of Urban G. and Geneva (Desmarais) Bertrand, Sr. and lived many years in Sturbridge before moving to The Overlook.

He was a graduate of the former Mary E. Wells High School, Class of 1955, and the American Academy of Funeral Service in

New York.

He was a longtime Funeral Director of 40 years, retiring in 1994. He also was a proud veteran of the US Army, serving during Korea with the 1st Calvary Division. Many years ago was a singer in the former Royal-aies Singing Group.

A Memorial Service for Jerry and Doris will be held Friday, August 14, 2026, at 10AM in the James C. Nicoll Chapel at the Overlook Masonic Home, 88 Masonic Home Road, Charlton, MA. There are no calling hours, and burial will be private.

Family and friends would like to thank the nurses and staff of the Overlook Masonic Health Center for the wonderful and compassionate care that was provided to Jerry and Doris.

Sansoucy Funeral Home is assisting with the arrangements.



LEGALS

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Worcester Division
Docket No.WO26P1576EA
NOTICE OF INFORMAL PROBATE
G.L. C. 190B, § 3-306
Estate Of:
CROCE RODOLFO DIGREGORIO
Date of Death: March 28, 2026

To all persons who have or may have some interest in the above-captioned estate and, if interested, to the Office of the Attorney General and the Department of Veterans Affairs, notice is hereby given on 04-27-2026 that the Petitioner

DANTE DIGREGORIO
SOUTHBRIDGE MA

intends to file with the above-named Probate and Family Court, not sooner than seven (7) days after this notice, a Petition for Informal Provate of Will Petition for Informal Appointment of Personal Representative, to serve without

surety on the bond.

DANTE DIGREGORIO
SOUTHBRIDGE MA

The estate is being administered under informal procedure by the Personal Representative under the Massachusetts Uniform Probate Code without supervision by the Court. Inventory and accounts are not required to be filed with the Court, but interested parties are entitled to notice regarding the administration from the Personal Representative and can petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including distribution of assets and expenses of administration. Interested parties are entitled to petition the Court to institute formal proceedings and to obtain orders terminating or restricting the powers of Personal Representatives appointed under informal procedure. A copy of the Petition and Will, if any, can be obtained from the Petitioner.

August 13, 2026

(SEAL)
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
LAND COURT
DEPARTMENT OF THE TRIAL COURT
26 SM 002376
ORDER OF NOTICE
TO:
DAWNA THOMAS-FOOTE,
TRUSTEE OF THE 66 CEDAR REALTY TRUST

and to all persons entitled to the benefit of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, 50 U.S.C. c. 50 §3901 (*et seq*):

PINNACLE FINANCIAL SERVICES 1 LLC

claiming to have an interest in a Mortgage covering real property in Sturbridge, 66 Cedar Street, given by Dawna Thomas-Foote, Trustee of the 66 Cedar Realty Trust to Pinnacle Financial Services 1 LLC, dated May 6, 2025, and recorded in Worcester South District Registry of

Deeds in Book 71954, Page 205, has/ have filed with this court a complaint for determination of Defendant's/ Defendants' Servicemembers status. If you now are, or recently have been, in the active military service of the United States of America, then you may be entitled to the benefits of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act. If you object to a foreclosure of the above-mentioned property on that basis, then you or your attorney must file a written appearance and answer in this court at **Three Pemberton Square, Boston, MA 02108** on or before 9/7/2026 or you may lose the opportunity to challenge the foreclosure on the ground of noncompliance with the Act.

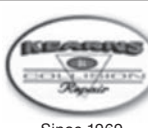
Witness, Gordon H. Piper, Chief Justice of this Court on 7/24/2026.

Attest:
Deborah J. Patterson
Recorder
August 13, 2026



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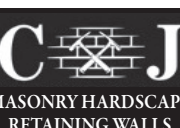
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Nichols College named Presenting Sponsor of Joe Andruzzi Foundation’s Young Professionals Council

DUDLEY — Nichols College and the Joe Andruzzi Foundation (JAF) today announced that Nichols College has been named the 2026 Presenting Sponsor of JAF’s Young Professionals Council (YPC), establishing a new partnership designed to engage the next generation of philanthropic leaders in the Foundation’s mission.

Through the partnership, Nichols College students, alumni and faculty will have opportunities to connect with JAF and participate in YPC events, volunteer initiatives, advocacy efforts and community engagement activities throughout New England. The collaboration will also highlight Nichols College’s development of future lead-

ers who understand the importance of service and giving back to their communities.

JAF’s Young Professionals Council brings together emerging professionals who share a passion for making a difference. Members support the Foundation through fundraising, volunteerism, advocacy and community engagement while developing leadership skills and building meaningful personal and professional connections.

“Partnering with the Joe Andruzzi Foundation reflects Nichols College’s commitment to preparing students to become leaders who make a meaningful difference in their professions and communities,” said Nichols College President William C. Pieczynski. “Through the Young Professionals Council, our students and alumni will have an opportunity to build connections, put their skills into action and support cancer patients and families throughout New England. We are proud to join JAF in advancing this important mission.”

As Presenting Sponsor, Nichols College will be recognized throughout the Young Professionals Council’s programming and communications. Representatives from Nichols College will also participate in future Council meetings and work alongside JAF to expand engagement among students, alumni and young professionals throughout the region.

“Nichols College’s investment in the next generation of philanthropic leadership will help us grow the Young Professionals Council and create even more opportunities for emerging professionals to connect, lead and give back,” said Hunter Andruzzi, Community Engagement Manager, Joe Andruzzi Foundation. “We are grateful to welcome Nichols College as our Presenting Sponsor and look forward to engaging its students and alumni in support of New England cancer patients and their families.”

The partnership will be publicly celebrated during the Young Professionals Council’s second annual Putting for Patients fundraiser on Thursday, July 23, from 6:30 to 9 p.m. at Puttshack Boston – Seaport, located at 58 Pier 4 Boulevard in Boston. The event will bring young professionals together for unlimited mini golf on Puttshack’s technology-driven courses, networking, light bites and a chance drawing featuring a variety of prize packages.

Proceeds will support JAF’s efforts to provide financial assistance to New England cancer patients and their families.

The event will also introduce Nichols College as the Council’s Presenting Sponsor and recognize students, alumni, interns, and other emerging professionals working throughout the Greater Boston area. A Nichols College representative will participate in the evening’s speaking program.

Tickets are \$40 for guests ages 21 and older and \$30 for guests under 21. Tickets and additional information are available at <https://onecau.se/26ypc>.

Bay Path celebrates 59 CTI graduates, expands workforce training programs

CHARLTON — Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical High School proudly celebrated the graduation of 59 students from its Career Technical Initiative (CTI) program last evening, marking a significant milestone in the program’s continued growth and impact.

The CTI program, launched in 2024, provides adult learners with access to high-quality, hands-on technical training designed to meet regional workforce demands. Last night’s graduates represent a diverse group of individuals who demonstrated dedication, perseverance, and a strong commitment to building new career pathways. Many balanced work, family, and personal responsibilities while completing rigorous 200-hour training programs that prepare them for immediate employment in high-demand industries.

“This graduating class represents the heart of what the CTI program is all about—opportunity, access, and workforce readiness,” said Marci Komssi, Program Coordinator. “We are incredibly proud of these 59 graduates and the determination they demonstrated throughout the program.”

The success of the CTI program is made possible through continued state investment and workforce development partnerships. As part of the Commonwealth’s commitment to economic recovery and growth, \$24.2 million was awarded to 23 organizations throughout Massachusetts to train 2,490 individuals. These strategic investments, led by the Massachusetts Workforce Skills Cabinet, are designed to expand access to career pathway programs and better position residents to fill critical workforce needs across the state.

Building on this momentum, Bay Path is expanding its program offerings to reach even more adult learners. For the first time, the school will offer a 200-hour Building Maintenance program in a five-week hybrid summer format, running from June 29 through July 31. This program is offered in partnership with MassHire, with applications opening this week.

Looking ahead to Fall 2026, Bay Path will offer nine CTI programs, further increasing access to career training opportunities. These programs include:

- Building Maintenance
- HVAC
- Culinary
- Manufacturing
- Auto Collision
- Auto Technology
- Diesel Mechanic
- Welding
- Electrical

Since its inception, the CTI program has continued to expand in both enrollment and program diversity, attracting students from local communities as well as across the region. The program remains a critical component of Bay Path’s efforts to support workforce development and provide meaningful career pathways for adult learners.

For more information about the CTI program or to apply for upcoming opportunities, please contact Marci Komssi at mkomssi@baypath.net.

About The Joe Andruzzi Foundation

The Joe Andruzzi Foundation is committed to providing help, hope, and a reason to smile, for New England cancer patients and their families by contributing financial support when it is needed most. Founded in 2008 by former New England Patriots three-time Super Bowl Champion offensive guard Joe Andruzzi and his wife Jen, the Joe Andruzzi Foundation grew out of Joe’s own successful battle with cancer. In 2007, Joe’s football career abruptly ended when he was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin’s Burkitt’s lymphoma. Disease-free less than a year later, Joe and Jen chose to dedicate their lives towards solving the financial distress a cancer diagnosis can cause in the lives of patients and families. For more information or to make a donation, please visit: joeandruzzifoundation.org.

About Nichols College

Nichols College has earned business accreditation from the prestigious Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB International), the longest serving global accrediting body for business schools and the largest business education network connecting learners, educators, and businesses worldwide. Founded in 1815, Nichols College transforms today’s students into tomorrow’s leaders through a dynamic, career-focused business and professional education. Nichols offers real-world learning focused on professional depth – combined with vibrant living, competitive athletics, and an unmatched alumni advantage – equipping students to exceed their own expectations. To learn more about Nichols College, visit www.nichols.edu.

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DONATION

continued from page A1

possible through the Ocean State Job Lot Charitable Foundation’s “Buy, Give, Get” Baby Formula Program, launched in June 2026. Through the initiative, customers made a \$20 donation at checkout, Ocean State Job Lot provided premium Kabrita goat milk formula to its charitable partners, and participating customers received a \$20 Crazy Deal® Gift Card for a future purchase. Ocean State Job Lot then worked with regional partners, including the WCRDSA, to distribute the formula to local organizations serving families in need.

The WCRDSA and Sheriff’s Office received nearly 10,000 cans, or the equivalent of 440,000 bottles, of infant formula through the initiative, marking the largest in-kind donation ever received by the Association.

A large-scale distribution was held on Tuesday, July 28, at the Worcester County Jail and House of Correction. Participating organizations included the Bridge of Faith Youth Center and Southbridge Food Share in Southbridge, along with Worcester Housing Authority, Catholic Charities Worcester, Yes We Care, El Buen Samaritano, Friendly House, Everyday Miracles Peer Recovery Center, Pernet Family Health Service, Project New Hope, and Safe Exit Initiative.

Addressing representatives from the participating nonprofit organizations, El Buen Samaritano (EBS) Director Mari Gonzalez emphasized the importance of a community working together, “Partnerships with the Sheriff, Ocean State Job Lot, all of us here, this is what it

takes. It takes all of us coming together to make our community better. We are here for our community members, and mothers in need, and that is what it is all about.”

“We’ve got partners who are coming together to do something at the behest of this organization (WCRDSA),” said David Sarlitto, Vice President of Corporate Giving at OSJL & Executive Director of the OSJL Charitable Foundation. “These organizations are enabling us to do something, as a company and as our customers wanted to do. We needed community partners to get these into the hands of those who need the formula, and the WCRDSA brought us that.”

Additional donations were distributed directly to smaller nonprofit organizations and community refrigerators throughout Worcester County, including Blackstone Valley Essential Needs Network, Blackstone’s Divine Mercy Food Pantry, Fitchburg Community Justice Support Center, Superior Waste’s Community Fridge, Webster Regional Reentry Center, Gardner CAC, Rutland’s Saint Patrick’s Parish, Clinton’s WHEAT Community Cupboard, Southbridge’s Bridge of Faith Youth Center, and many others.

“We’ve built a tremendous partnership with Ocean State Job Lot over the years,” said Sheriff Evangelidis. “It started with our annual winter coat drive and evolved to include a food drive, toy drive, back-to-school supply drive, and now this. Ocean State’s support enables organizations like the WCRDSA to deliver critical resources to local nonprofits that work directly with families that are most in need.”



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Running for each other

Southbridge mother-son duo returns to Falmouth

SOUTHBRIDGE — The Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts (BIA-MA) is pleased to announce it will be returning to compete in the 54th Annual ASICS Falmouth Road Race with Team BIA-MA on Sunday, Aug. 16. Team BIA-MA will have a total of 29 runners for this iconic race, which is an important annual fundraising and awareness event for the organization.

Both from Southbridge, Austan Bellefeuille and his mom, Karen Dmohowski, will hit the Falmouth start line together this year as mother and son: Bellefeuille, a brain injury survivor who sustained his injury in 2013 and is returning to the team for the second time, will run alongside Dmohowski, who first discovered BIA-MA online in the aftermath of her son's injury and



has since become a passionate advocate, returning for her fifth year and second time running side-by-side with Austan; together, they embody the heart of Team BIA-MA — survivor and caregiver, showing up for a community that has shown up for them, while Karen also looks forward to reuniting with teammates from years past.

“We are excited and thankful for this incredible team of inspiring runners who are determined to accomplish their personal milestones while raising awareness for brain injury,” said BIA-MA Chief Executive Officer Nicole Godaire. “Each runner brings a powerful personal connection to brain injury, which makes their dedication even more meaningful and helps shine a light on the impact brain injury has on individuals, families, and communi-

ties.”

Though the Falmouth Road Race is not intended to solely be a charity race, the “Numbers for Nonprofits” Program allows nonprofit organizations like BIA-MA to both fundraise and participate. To support any of the Team BIA-MA runners in the 2026 ASICS Falmouth Road Race, please visit the team fundraising page. More information can also be found at biama.org/falmouthroadrace.

The Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts (BIA-MA) is the only organization in the state dedicated to improving the lives of those affected by brain injury while reducing its incidence and impact through advocacy, education, prevention, research, and support. For more information, visit www.biama.org.

✿✿✿Friday's Child✿✿✿



Janelis

Age 16

Registration #9463

Janelis is a gregarious, independent, and outgoing young woman who brings a lot of energy and enthusiasm wherever she goes. She enjoys expressing herself through singing and loves spending time outside exploring and enjoying new experiences. Janelis has a strong love for reading, especially comic books, with Smile being one of her favorites. She enjoys getting lost in a good story and discovering new characters and adventures. Janelis is also a big fan of trying new foods and exploring different cuisines. Some of her favorite meals include Spanish foods and Chick-fil-A. She enjoys discovering new flavors and appreciates the experience of sharing meals with others. Janelis is excited about the future and looks forward to gaining more independence. She hopes to get her first job and earn her driver's permit soon, taking important steps toward reaching her personal goals. With her curiosity, confidence, and positive spirit, Janelis continues to embrace new opportunities and experiences.

<https://www.mareinc.org/child/54477717817>

Can I Adopt?

If you're at least 18 years old, have a stable source of income, and room in your heart, you may be a perfect match to adopt a waiting child. Adoptive parents can be single, married, or partnered; experienced or not; renters or homeowners; LGBTQ+ singles and couples. As an adoptive parent, you won't have to pay any fees, adoption from foster care is completely free in Massachusetts.

The process to adopt a child from foster care includes training, interviews, and home visits to determine if adoption is right for you. These steps will help match you with a child or sibling group that your family will fit well with. To learn more about adoption from foster care visit www.mareinc.org. Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE) can give you guidance and information on the adoption process. Reach out today to find out all the ways you can help children and teens in foster care.

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Free concert at

Jacob Edwards Library

SOUTHBRIDGE — The StarCats jazz trio will perform a free concert called Day Dream at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday Aug. 20 at the Jacob Edwards Library, Southbridge.

A delightfully eclectic New England jazz trio, the StarCats was formed in 2017 by vocalist Sarah Clay with the vision to make jazz more fun, accessible, and entertaining for everyone. The StarCats create a new themed concert program each year. For 2026, the StarCats present Day Dream. Where do you go when your mind wanders? Sweet reverie, thoughts of love? Or rueful rumination? There's music for every mood.

Inspired by the public outreach of Winton Marsalis, the vocal brilliance of Ella Fitzgerald, and the humor of Mose Allison, the StarCats intertwine standards by greats like Duke Ellington and Thelonius Monk, Bossa Nova by Jobim, and arrangements of Stevie Wonder, Sarah Bareilles, Joni Mitchell and Soundgarden. You'll hear swinging Retro-pop, spicy Latin rhythms, soul-aching ballads and mellow blues.

Sarah Clay (vocals/flute) thrills with expressive, crystalline tone and sultry flute. Bob Ferrier (guitar) sparks joy with tasty chords and playful improvisation. Steve Bulmer (upright bass) lays down a sweet, rhythmic groove that soothes the soul.

"The StarCats are magnificent! Sarah's scat and flawless range... ingenious bass riffs... fingers dancing up down the guitar... I left inspired and uplifted," says Rev. Pirtle, Westhampton.

The StarCats have performed at the Northampton Jazz Festival, the Litchfield Sunrise Concert Series, the Pittsfield Jazz Festival, the 1794 Meetinghouse, Workshop 13, Summer on Strong Street Festival, the Westfield Athenaeum, the Berkshire Athenaeum, and more.

This concert is supported in part by a grant from the Southbridge Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

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