

# Chicopee Register

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## Fundraiser brings community and feline friends together

By Kristin Rivers  
Editor  
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CHICOPEE - The community gathered at the Rumbleseat Bar & Grille from 5 to 7 p.m. on March 28 for an Adoption Fundraiser event.

The event was a partnership between Rumbleseat and Halfway Home Cat Rescue Inc., a nonprofit rescue group in Chicopee around since 2012 dedicated to the care and adoption of cats and kittens.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY KRISTIN RIVERS

A foster kitten yawns during the Adoption Fundraiser Event at Rumbleseat Bar & Grille on March 28 to support Halfway Home Cat Rescue Inc. in Chicopee.

Throughout the event, attendees met with volunteers and some of the kittens up for adoption, later filling out an application and receiving approval on the spot to take their new furry friend home that night.

The Rumbleseat also donated 15% of all purchases of food, drinks and takeout from the restaurant during the event.

Donations of wish list items for the organization including litter, Purina Kitten Chow, wet and dry Wellness Kitten food, Friskies Wet Food, Stage 1 KMR and wet and dry Royal Canin Baby Cat food were also dropped off.

Robin Fiskaa, president of Halfway Home Cat Res-

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TURLEY PHOTOS BY KRISTIN RIVERS

An exterior shot of the Emily L. Partyka Central Library on Front Street in Chicopee, 20 years later.

## Library celebrates 20 years

By Kristin Rivers  
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CHICOPEE - The library celebrated its 20th anniversary with a reception in the main lobby on April 9.

The reception included remarks from Laura Bovee, the library's director, Mayor John Vieau, State Sen. Jacob Oliveira (D-Ludlow) and State Sen. John Velis (D-Westfield) and an exhibit of photos showcasing the library's construction process.

The Emily L. Partyka Central Library officially opened in Chicopee on April 20, 2004.

Bovee thanked everyone "who had a part in making this library building a possibility."

"It's a joy and a privilege to come in every day to a building that the community loved and wanted to make happen and willed to happen and worked really hard to raise the funds for," Bovee said. "You can feel it in the building. It's folks who showed up when there was a need and made it happen."

Bovee also thanked the staff as April 9 marked National Library Workers Day.

"They are also folks who show up and do what's needed to help the community," Bovee said.

Vieau reflected on the library's impact on the city, calling it "a living, breathing entity that opens up the world for all of us."

"Offering adventures in learning, opportunities through every

page turned and through every story that's told. Thanks to the unwavering dedication of our library professionals, it's transformed into a treasure trove of knowledge and a central hub for our community's growth and education," Vieau said.

Vieau also led the audience in a moment of silence for John Michon, the former president of the Friends of the Chicopee Public Library until his retirement in 2022, who spearheaded the Friends' "Raise the Roof Campaign" to fund the library.

"I know he's here in spirit because you can feel him in the room," Vieau said.

Oliveira shared he and his family used to go to the original library

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## Chicopee celebrates World Autism Awareness Day

By Kristin Rivers  
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CHICOPEE - Residents, community members and more gathered at City Hall on April 2 to celebrate World Autism Awareness Day.

World Autism Awareness Day recognizes and celebrates people on the autism spectrum and encourages everyone to raise awareness, teach acceptance and educate one another.

April is, also, recognized as Autism Awareness Month.

During the event, attendees stopped by the mayor's hallway for an interactive art show. Called the Sunshine Village

Sensory Showcase, the exhibit highlighted how individuals with autism interact with the five senses, with attendees scanning a QR Code to learn more about their experiences.

One of these artists is Louis Chevalier, who loves to make music.

From the left, Gina Kos, executive director at Sunshine Village, Mayor John Vieau and City Treasurer Marie Laflamme, also a board member at Sunshine Village, smile with the mayor's proclamation celebrating April 2 as World Autism Awareness Day in Chicopee.

The event at City Hall was in collaboration between Sunshine Village and the City of Chicopee.



"I sing, I write, I produce and I make my own beats. Music is such a huge part of my life and I'm proud of what I do and I love going to Sunshine Village," Chevalier said.

Upstairs, in City Hall Auditorium, attendees enjoyed refreshments from Sunshine Village's Catering Team, unique creations by Sunshine Village Artists with Distinct Abilities, including art, photography, sensory rings and bottles, picture frames, alcohol ink coasters and more.

In his remarks at the reception, Mayor John Vieau said, "We envision a world where in-

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# Chicopee firefighter Glen Olbrych retires

By Kristin Rivers  
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CHICOPEE - Firefighter Glen Olbrych has retired from the fire department after 30 years of service.

In addition to his work there, Olbrych also worked in the Water Department for four years, having a combined 34 years of service to Chicopee.

Olbrych shared he was following in his father's footsteps when he pursued the role, enjoying the brotherhood and the opportunity to help people.

"My father was a firefighter who served for, I believe, it was 30 years. He retired in 1991," Olbrych said. "I didn't go to college or trade school or anything like that, so I took the firefighter exam, and I think I took a couple of others, but the firefighter was the job I always wanted."

Olbrych later got involved in the union as their union secretary and, later, the union president.

As part of the union, Olbrych explained he would attend state meetings of the Professional Firefighters of Massachusetts, conventions with the International Association of Firefighters and networking with other fire departments.

"It was just being able to advocate on behalf of my fellow



Firefighter Glen Olbrych in the Station 4 fire truck during his retirement from the fire department on March 26.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF KATIE COLLINS-KALBAUGH

A group photo of members of the Chicopee Fire Department with Firefighter Glen Olbrych upon his retirement from the fire department on March 26.

firefighters, whether it'd be at the local level with the city and/or at the state level and, also, at the international level," Olbrych said.

Olbrych was also part of the Chapter 32B Section 19 Committee, comprising union individuals working with the city when they discussed different health insurances and implementing them.

"I also became the chairperson of that committee. Also, the city has a medical dental trust and I became the trustee who represented all the employees in the city on that medical dental trust," Olbrych said.

Another highlight of Olbrych's career was when he and other firefighters took part in "The Ballpark Elimination Tour," where they visited every baseball stadium in the country and held different charity events.

"We raised over \$100,000 for a number of different beneficiaries. Cystic fibrosis, Relay for Life, American Cancer Society, Cory J. Garwacki Fund.

Also raised money for Rays of Hope and Lorraine's Soup Kitchen, you name it," Olbrych said. Olbrych also reflected on working closely with Chief Daniel Stamborski during the pandemic, utilizing a connection with Tito's Vodka to help with dispersing hand sanitizer throughout the fire depart-

ment.

"Whether it'd be for the safety of our members, working with the city to make sure that if any of the members came down with COVID that they were going to be covered," Olbrych said.

Olbrych was humble in reflecting on how he was able to help not only the residents, but also the fire department and city as a whole.

"Just being able to help and serve," Olbrych said. "That's something I've tried to do no matter what position I was in."

Post-retirement, Olbrych said he will continue working at Teddy Bear Pools & Spas, a job he's been at for nearly 38 years.

He called the job of being a firefighter "a fantastic, rewarding job," offering this advice to future firefighters.

"It does have its difficul-

ties. Being on the ambulance in high-pressure situations or responding to an emergency on one of the apparatus, whether it'd be an engine or a ladder. It can be high-stressed, but it's very rewarding," Olbrych said.

Olbrych wants the community to know it's been an honor to serve them and thanked them for supporting the fire department.

"The support of the fire department is extremely important. It serves a vital service for the citizens and the city of Chicopee. I think it's probably one of the best services in the area," Olbrych said.

Olbrych said Chicopee is in good hands with Stamborski and the firefighters.

"It's the best I've seen in my entire career," Olbrych said.

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## Chicopee Public Library April programming

CHICOPEE - Here are some of our upcoming library programs for the month of April.

Tuesday, April 16 at 6:30 p.m. Concert with Too Human. Enjoy a fun hour of jazz standards from the Great American Songbook and jazzy bluesy originals by Too Human - played and sung with heart and humor! They will be accompanied by Keala Kaumeheiwa on upright bass. This program is sponsored in part by a grant from the

Chicopee Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

Thursday, April 18 at 6 p.m. Needlecraft Circle Do you want a place to work on your needlecraft projects while you chat with other crafters? Join us in the Conference Room on the third Thursday of each month to work on your projects.

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# School Committee approves continued participation for school choice

By Kristin Rivers  
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CHICOPEE - School Committee approved on April 3 to continue participating in school choice.

Jennifer Bellville, assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, provided an overview of school choice data ahead of the vote.

In the 2022-2023 school year, Bellville explained 77 students were enrolled, a decrease of 18 students from the 2021-2022 school year.

For acceptance, 32 new students were accepted this current year even though there was a recommendation for 128 slots open.

"Right now, we currently have enrolled 104 students. This is a decrease of 27 students from the 2022-2023 school year," Bellville said.

Bellville's recommendation for next year was 22 slots in grades one through five, with eight slots for Barry Elementary School and Bowie Elementary School, five slots for Fairview Elementary School and four slots for Streiber Elementary School.

Last year, the recommendation was for 23 slots for kindergarten and 42 slots for middle and high school.

"This year, we're not recommending any slots in kindergarten. Kindergarten is that year that you never know what you're

going to get. We also found that some of our kindergarten were very overloaded," Bellville said. "Like at Bowe School, kindergarten classes range from 22 to 25 students as well as we had to bus the students across the district because there was no more room. So, we want to make sure that we're keeping those numbers down and, as we look at our achievement scores that you saw in Dr. Ware's presentation, we need to be starting early with early literacy and so we really want to focus on those years and kindergarten is a very critical year."

Bellville added after further conversation with Assistant Superintendent for Student and Support Services Carol Kruser, Superintendent Dr. Marcus Ware, the executive team and the middle and high school principals, there would, also, be no slots for middle and high school, citing discipline, academic achievement and many other factors.

"We feel at this time that it would not be in our best interest to open up for school slots in middle and high school," Bellville said.

She clarified all of the students currently enrolled in school choice stay enrolled.

"So, the 104 students who are with us will continue with us if they so choose for next year. These slots are just additional slots," Bellville said.

On spending, Bellville said the funding comes from the

Chapter 70 base budget.

"So, we're not paying a bill or anything like that. That's money that is already off the top of our Chapter 70 base budget," Bellville said. "It's that receiving school choice funds that goes into that revolving account."

Another item of note was the number of students going to charter schools, are homeschooled or parochial school, also playing a role in school choice.

"Between Hampden Charter School of Science East and West, 236 students attend that charter school. We also have about 145 students in home school and about 350 families who choose to do parochial," Bellville said.

Vice Chair Donald Lamothe addressed the school choice numbers for charter schools.

"Is it predominantly like third through eighth or is it kindergarten through sixth?" Lamothe said.

Bellville replied it's sixth through 12 for Hampden Charter School.

"In looking at that, it really varied," Bellville said.

Ward 6 School Committee member Sonny Brooks asked about the level students were leaving.

"Are we losing a lot of sophomores and juniors to avoid MCAS?" Brooks said.

Bellville said no.

"We're losing them across the board pretty evenly. So when you break down our numbers, and

there's a large variety of why people choose to do school choice, sometimes it's for family reasons. Their family works in another school district and so they want to bring their child with them or for virtual schooling," Bellville said. "There's a wide variety and that's why we also want to get more information on that, but there isn't one grade level that really stands out that we're losing more students to than another."

School Committee At-Large member Susan Szetela-Lopes then asked about siblings for accepted school-choice students.

"For students who are accepted into school choice, are their younger siblings automati-

cally grandfathered in and they're able to attend Chicopee schools?" Szetela-Lopes said.

Bellville said they are not. "They're only grandfathered in when they are looked at as a priority student. If there is an open slot in that grade level," Bellville said.

After Szetela-Lopes asked if this was a change, Bellville confirmed it was not and that "it's always been the policy."

The motion to have Chicopee Public Schools continue participating in the School Choice program for the 2024-2025 school year, offering 22 seats for grades one through five carried 12-0.

## APRIL from page 2

Thursday, April 25 at 6 p.m. Polish Paper Cutting (wycinanki) with Susan Urban. If you have small pointed scissors for cutting paper, please bring them with you. We'll provide the paper. Susan Urban is a Polish Craft and Culture specialist. She will share some of her work as well as teach you how to make your own creation. Ages 10+ are welcome. Register at the Reference Desk, email us at [cpl@chicopeepubliclibrary.org](mailto:cpl@chicopeepubliclibrary.org) or call at 413-594-1800x3.

As always, the computer lab is available to work on genealogy on Tuesdays and Thursdays

from 10 a.m. - Noon and 6 p.m. - 8 p.m. We are a FamilySearch Affiliate Library and have helpful databases such as Ancestry (Library edition), American Ancestors and HeritageQuest to help you in your search. We have also just added Newspapers.com to our genealogy resources available in the library.

If you need technology help, we offer one-on-one computer help on Mondays and Fridays at 2 p.m. or by appointment.

For more information, email or call the Reference Desk at [cpl@chicopeepubliclibrary.org](mailto:cpl@chicopeepubliclibrary.org) and 594-1800 x3.

## CPD Ice Truck returns soon



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHICOPEE POLICE DEPARTMENT

CHICOPEE – With the weather warming up, the police department is excited to have their ice cream truck come out for the season. The ice cream truck will be hitting the streets soon, so stay tuned.

## Chicopee Senior Center Volunteer Driver Needed

CHICOPEE - The Chicopee Council on Aging at RiverMills Center is looking for licensed drivers who are willing to volunteer a few hours a week and provide rides to Chicopee's older adults. The City of Chicopee provides the vehicles that the drivers will be using and these cars are fully insured and maintained by the City's maintenance department.

The Chicopee Council on Aging's Transportation Department provides rides for any Chicopee resident who is 55 years

old or older. This service is for medical, dental, legal and hairdresser appointments, pharmacy pick-ups, banking and shopping. The service is available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. till 3 p.m.

Any licensed driver who is interested in becoming a volunteer driver should contact the Council on Aging Transportation Department at 413-536-5733 for additional information or stop by the reception desk to pick up an application.



## BELCHERTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAM 2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR

The Belchertown Public School District is now accepting applications for the following School Choice openings for the 2024-2025 school year:

Grade K	7	Grade 6	2
Grade 1	10	Grade 7	10
Grade 2	6	Grade 8	10
Grade 4	3	Grade 9	5
Grade 5	5	Grade 10	5

The Belchertown Public Schools combine innovation and tradition to provide positive educational experiences for all of our students through quality programs, dynamic teaching and healthy relationships.

The deadline for submitting a **complete** application is 4:00 p.m. on **Friday, May 10, 2024.**

The selection of non-resident students for admission will be in the form of a random drawing when the number of requests exceeds the number of available spaces. There will be two drawings for this purpose. The first will take place on May 10, 2024, and in the event of unexpected additional openings, a second drawing will be conducted on August 9, 2024.

The application and guidelines can be downloaded at [www.belchertownps.org](http://www.belchertownps.org) or picked up at 14 Maple St., Belchertown, MA 01007.

*The Belchertown School District does not discriminate in the admission of any child on the basis of age, sex, gender identity, race, religion, color, national origin, sexual orientation or ancestry, athletic performance, physical handicap, special need, academic performance, disability or proficiency in the English language in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.*

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GUEST COLUMN



## When should my wife claim her Social Security benefit?

Dear Rusty

I just saw an article which said that certain spousal options were going away, but there are still good options for when a spouse can claim. I am filing for my Social Security to start in October when I turn 70. My wife's Full Retirement Age is in December, and she now plans to file then for half of what my FRA benefit would have been (our original plan was for both to file in August). My wife's main reason for delaying until her FRA is to lock her into my maximum benefit if she has to someday change to Survivor's Benefit. Will this be gone for us? Neither of us was born before Jan. 1, 1954. Please advise. Signed: Planning for Both

Dear Planning

I expect that the article you refer to was speaking of the option to claim only a spousal benefit first and allow one's personal SS retirement benefit to grow. That option was available only to those who were born before 1954 and had reached full retirement age. As you now know that option is not available to you.

Assuming your wife's highest benefit entitlement will be as your spouse, your current strategy – you claim your maximum benefit to start in October at age 70 and your wife starts her benefit in December at her FRA is a good one which will yield the maximum possible monthly benefit for both of you. But for clarity, your wife's survivor benefit as your widow has nothing to do with when she claims her spouse benefits now.

The only thing which will affect your wife's benefit as your surviving spouse is her age when she claims the survivor benefit. If she has already reached her FRA of 66 years and 8 months when you pass, she will get 100% of the amount you were receiving when you died, instead of the smaller spousal amount she was receiving while you were living. Her survivor benefit would only be less than 100% of yours if she claimed it before reaching her full retirement age (which, of course, we hope would not to be the case).

Just so you have the complete picture, your wife could, if desired, claim her Social Security to start at the same time as you in October but, since that would be earlier than her FRA, the amount she would get would be less than 50% of your FRA entitlement. Her spouse benefit would be reduced by 0.694% for each month earlier than her FRA it starts.

For example, if your wife starts her spousal benefit in October when your benefit starts, she will get about 98.6% of the amount she would get if she waited until December to start her benefits. That's a permanent reduction, so if your wife's life expectancy is at least average about 87, it's likely still wisest for her to wait until her FRA to start benefits. But in any case, when your wife claims her spousal benefit now will have no effect on the survivor benefit she will get as your future widow.

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GUEST COLUMN



## Transplanting your homegrown seedlings

I bet there are a few garden enthusiasts out there with seedlings up and growing indoors.

My tomatoes are just poking through, but my peppers are ready for transplanting. Why transplant you ask? It's important that we give our young plants room to spread out!

If seeds were sown in rows, chances are that several seedlings have sprouted and are now growing within a close proximity to one another. They are competing for nutrients and moisture.

Even if two seeds were sown in a single cell of a six-pack and both germinated, they too are competing with one another in that tiny of a space. So, if we want garden center quality seedlings, we must transplant them to their own cell or small pot.

You know a seedling is ready for transplant when it has its "true leaves," not the cotyledon leaves that were first to sprout from the seed, but those that come right after. At this point in growth plant roots aren't tangled up and therefore transplant shock can be kept to a minimum.

Although the seedlings may be tiny and appear fragile, transplanting them is quite simple.

First, take a wooden plant label or dull butter knife and "cut" into the row of seedlings. Then, use your implement "spatula-style" to remove a small cluster of plants from the bottom up.

I always tell folks to "think brownies!" Be careful to get as many roots as you can.

Once you've done this it is time to separate them from one another. Gently pull on a leaf, not the stem, to pry them apart.

Think of it this way: the plant has two leaves but only one stem. If it should snap, that's it! Leaves on the other hand, can and will be replaced if accidentally torn off.

Individual seedlings can be planted in small containers or cell packs filled with soil-less growing medium. We steer clear of gar-

den soil because of the pathogens and weed seeds it may contain as well as its tendency not to drain very well.

Soilless mix is sterile, and has the ability to retain moisture yet drain freely- just what the young seedling needs as it grows additional roots and top growth.

Make a hole in the moistened growing medium with your finger, a pencil or wooden dibble. Insert the seedling to the correct depth then firm around it with your fingers.

Most are transplanted to the same depth they were growing in the pack.

One exception is tomatoes; they can be buried deeper than they started out. This is because tomatoes have the ability to make roots along the length of their stem.

Another exception are marigolds. More roots mean healthier shoots!

Water the transplants well with a gentle spray. They can now be put back under the artificial lights you've rigged up.

Continue to keep the lights within inches of the plants for the stockiest growth. Or, if you're lucky enough to have a sunroom or hobby greenhouse, the seedlings will thrive there!

Shade them from direct sun for a few days after transplant to prevent wilting. Soon the roots will recover from the shock of transplant and will again be able to sustain the plant.

Night time temperatures can dip as low as 50 degrees for most plants. In fact, lower night temps will help to ensure the stocky specimen we desire.

Fertilize with half-strength liquid plant food every 10 days to two weeks. Begin to "harden-off" your transplants a couple of weeks prior to putting in the ground.

Thus far they have been kept in a carefully controlled environment. Planting them without a period of acclimatization may mean disaster!

Place them outdoors in a shady spot protected from the wind for only a few hours each day. As the days progress keep them out longer and increase their exposure to bright sun and wind.

Don't forget to water during this process, but forgo all fertilizer.

With less than two months to go until the danger of frost is officially passed, our home grown seedlings won't have long to wait, and neither will we!

*Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 31 years she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to [pouimette@turley.com](mailto:pouimette@turley.com) with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.*

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The *Chicopee Register* welcomes submissions of news in or related to Chicopee and its residents. Our "People News," is filled with submitted engagement announcements, wedding announcements, birth announcements, your new baby or news about your 25th or 50th anniversary celebrations. Please e-mail correspondence along with a photo to [chicopeeregister@turley.com](mailto:chicopeeregister@turley.com) or send it to: Chicopee Register, c/o Turley Publications, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069.

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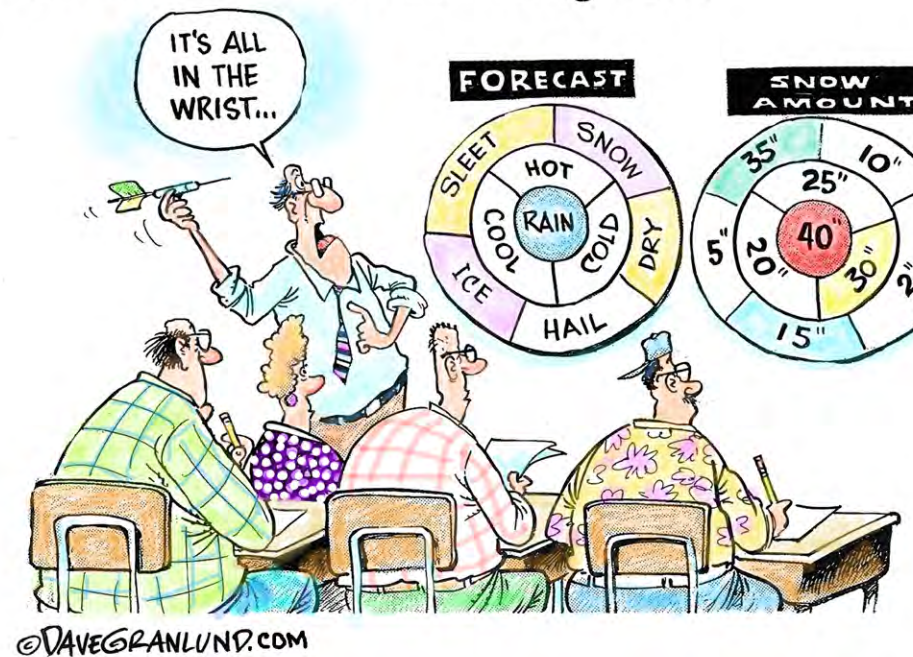
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# IN THE CITY



A photo of the construction process for the Emily L. Partyka Central Library during the library's 20th anniversary reception on April 9.



A wide shot depicting varying photos highlighting the construction process of the Emily L. Partyka Central Library during the library's 20th anniversary reception on April 9.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY KRISTIN RIVERS

State Sen. John Velis (D-Westfield) reflects on the impact of libraries.



State Sen. Jacob Oliveira (D-Ludlow) talks about the importance of supporting libraries during the Chicopee Public Library's 20th anniversary reception.



The original "Raise the Roof" campaign banner to support fundraising efforts for the Chicopee Public Library was on display during the 20th anniversary reception on April 9.



Laura Bovee, director at Chicopee Public Library, provides opening remarks during the Chicopee Public Library's 20th anniversary reception.

## LIBRARY from page 1

in Chicopee Center, stressing how libraries are places where the community gathers together.

"Libraries are centers of democracy and in this week as we celebrate Library Week and celebrate all of our public libraries, please know that libraries hold a special place in my heart," Oliveira said. "It is something we need to cherish, preserve and protect access to free thought and free material and that's what our libraries do each and every day."

Velis said "Everyone has a library story," sharing how a library in Westfield gave him a room for two and a half months to study for the bar exam.

"I, literally, have never forgotten that," Velis said. "Any time stuff comes up in government, funding questions, anything that comes up, I have that library story in the back of my mind and I know that every single person here kind of has their own story today."

Bill Zaskey, a former Ward 4 City Councilor who helped the city get the library where it is located today, explained the process involved hiring an architect for the project, with the Architect Selection Committee choosing Caolo & Bienik Architects after releasing another architect from their contract.

"They worked very, very well with us. Everything that you see here in the library went through my committee. The selection of the woodwork, the flooring, the style of the building. Everything was done by us," Zaskey said.

On the funding, Zaskey credited the Friends through their Raise the Roof campaign, adding everyone owes "a little debt of gratitude" to Michon.

"He was a very, very friendly person, spoke to everyone, always had a good word to say about everybody. Just a pleasant person to be around all the time," Zaskey said.

Zaskey wants the community to know the library is possible due to everyone's support.

"I think we're grateful to all the citizens that have contributed to it, the businesses, the entire community. It really made this a success," Zaskey said.

Zaskey encourages residents to continue supporting the library.

"Come in, take a look. Join the library if you haven't joined it yet. Become a member, support the Friends of the Library because they're always doing very positive things for the growth of the library," Zaskey said.



Mayor John Vieau gives a speech about the Chicopee Public Library during the library's 20th anniversary reception.

Sat. & Sun.  
April 27-28  
10am - 4pm

"End of Season," an Egg Tempera by Joan Nelson  
West Springfield, Massachusetts

Southwick Cultural Council  
**23rd Annual  
Fine Art Exhibition  
Show & Sale**

Featuring more than 40 artists from Western MA and Northern CT. Oils, acrylics, watercolors, wood carvings, sculpture, photography, mixed media, and more. Live art demonstrations. Remembrances from the Southwick Historical Society. Musical performances each day.

Southwick Town Hall  
454 College Highway, RTS 10 and 202  
www.southwickma.org/cultural-council

## Books, stories & art

Visual art inspired by books with *Enchanted Circle*

CHICOPEE – Through the Holyoke-Chicopee Family & Community Program, which coordinates services and engages families, join "Books, stories & art: Visual art inspired by books with *Enchanted Circle*".

*Enchanted Circle* will lead these hands-on sessions with fun art and literacy projects for families with children ages three to five years old.

Tuesdays during March and April from 10:30 a.m. to Noon

Informal playtime at 10:30 a.m.

At the RiverMills Assisted Living at 7 River Mills Drive, Chicopee

Register with Christine at [zaskeyc@headstart.org](mailto:zaskeyc@headstart.org) or 413-536-0363 x 4536.

WestMass ElderCare  
50th ANNIVERSARY

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– Sherry Anderson

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# IN THE CITY



From the left, Lisa Montero, Cara Sullivan and Chris Pollander smile for a group photo during the World Autism Awareness Day festivities at Chicopee City Hall on April 2.



A close-up shot of art pieces created by Sunshine Village Artists with Distinct Abilities during World Autism Awareness Day festivities on April 2.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY KRISTIN RIVERS

An art piece depicting hearing, one of the five senses, in the Sunshine Village Sensory Showcase art exhibition in the mayor's hallway at City Hall.



An art piece depicting taste, one of the five senses, in the Sunshine Village Sensory Showcase art exhibition in the mayor's hallway at City Hall.



An art piece depicting touch, one of the five senses, in the Sunshine Village Sensory Showcase art exhibition in the mayor's hallway at City Hall.



An art piece depicting sight, one of the five senses, in the Sunshine Village Sensory Showcase art exhibition in the mayor's hallway at City Hall.



An art piece depicting smell, one of the five senses, in the Sunshine Village Sensory Showcase art exhibition in the mayor's hallway at City Hall.

## AUTISM from page 1

dividuals on the autism spectrum are not just recognized but are truly championed and celebrated for who they are."

"To achieve this, we must act fearlessly. We must advocate for policies and practices that support autism, not just in words, but in action," Vieau said. "We invite each of you to join us in this fearless pursuit. Pledge your support for a world that embraces differences and recognizes the potential in every person."

Vieau later presented the mayor's proclamation to Gina Kos, executive director at Sunshine Village, who also presented it to City Treasurer Marie Laflamme, a longtime board member at Sunshine Village.

Laflamme said getting awareness out to everyone about autism is important.

"Awareness is everything, education is everything. It's understanding different people. It's just caring for people and that's what Sunshine does. They really do care for their folks," Laflamme said.

Laflamme said community events like this foster acceptance and provide an opportunity to appreciate the talents in the community.

"Not only kids, but adults bring to the community," Laflamme said. "They shine. They're wonderful, with artists, writers and painters. There's a lot of talent out there that we didn't even know and I have the ability to meet by being a part of Sunshine Village."

Kos said the event is "a great way to celebrate that everyone can be included in our community and everyone can lead a meaningful life."

"We are so grateful that we get so much support from the community. We have a great relationship and partnership with the Chicopee Police Department as well as the city hall and so many of their municipal departments including the library, including the senior center. We're so proud to be a member of the Chicopee community and this is one little way for us to give back," Kos said.

Kos also expressed joy seeing everyone's talents on display.

"I'm so incredibly proud. I couldn't be happier. I think this is just a visualization of the unique talents that the folks that come to Sunshine Village have and this is just a realization of one more step in their dreams of either selling their handcrafted good or being able to be part of a culinary team," Kos said.

Police Sgt. Missy Lyman shared the police department partners with Sunshine Village to help people on the autism spectrum become familiar with police officers.

Lyman said events like this also provide the police department with an opportunity for awareness, education and acceptance.



"Typically, people that are on the autism spectrum tend to have sensory overload, so being familiar and having positive interactions before that emergency situation hits really helps the situation," Lyman said.


Lyman said the police department loves working with Sunshine Village and other community organizations, adding events like this mean a lot to her as her youngest son is autistic.

"Everything is just so welcoming, everything is just positive. It's always hugs and high-fives when we go see them. It's always positive," Lyman said.

Kos encourages the community to continue learning about autism and follow the course of awareness to acceptance to appreciation.

"We hope that they see that everybody can have a great day and by working together, we can make that happen," Kos said.



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**MIDDLE AND UPPER SCHOOL**  
**PREVIEW**  
**NIGHT**



**Tuesday, April 30**  
**6-7 p.m.**

Learn more about our programs and community. Meet faculty and students.  
**For families interested in Grades 6-12, PG.**

**MIDDLE SCHOOL PREVIEW**  
 Middle School building

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 Mattern Science Center

RSVP: [wma.us/preview](http://wma.us/preview)

# Sports

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## Colts fall on the road to Agawam

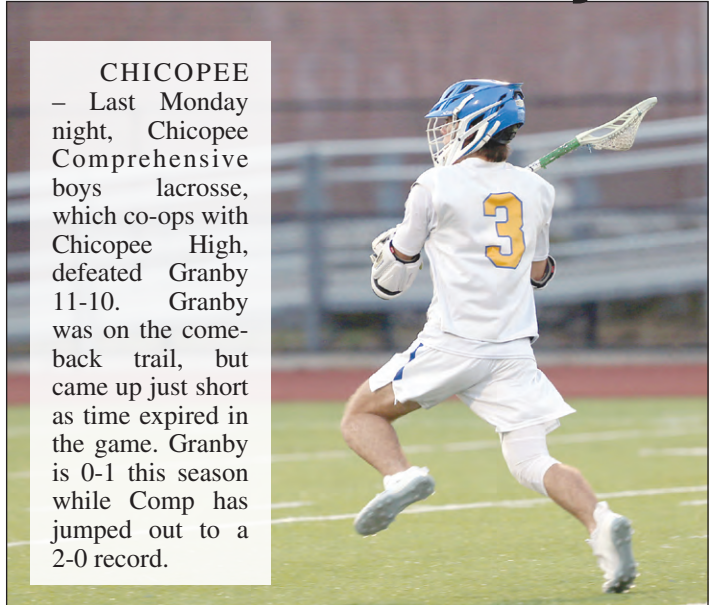


Noah Johnson sends a pass away from the back line.



Edrien Roman gets the bump to start a play.

## Comp picks up close win over Granby



Shane Upham looks to shoot a pass up the field.



Derek Lonczak picks up a ground ball.

**CHICOPEE** – Last Monday night, Chicopee Comprehensive boys lacrosse, which co-ops with Chicopee High, defeated Granby 11-10. Granby was on the comeback trail, but came up just short as time expired in the game. Granby is 0-1 this season while Comp has jumped out to a 2-0 record.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM

By Tim Peterson  
Sports Correspondent

AGAWAM—After capturing the Western Mass. Class B and the Division 2 state championship titles a year ago, the opponents listed on the Agawam’s boys varsity volleyball schedule will be looking to celebrate a win against them this spring.

The Chicopee Comp players, who had lost the previous four matchups against their North Division rivals, were hoping to accomplish that feat last Friday night.

Each of the sets were close, but the Brownies managed to post a 3-0 (25-23, 25-18, 25-22) victory over the Colts at Clifford P. Kibbe Gymnasium.

“All of the teams in our league are very good and we always try to play our brand of volleyball against them,” said Agawam head coach Kevin Pender. “We also won a big league match the other night.”

Two nights earlier, the Brownies made the short trip to Westfield High School where they squeaked out a 3-2 victory over the Bombers. It was a rematch of the 2023 Division 2 state finals, which the Brownies



Chace Murphy gets a point for the Colts.



Daniel Gauthier goes for a spike.

won in three sets at Worcester State University.

Westfield was the only team to defeat the Brownies on their home court during the 2023 reg-

ular season.

The Brownies home win against the Colts improved their overall season record to 4-1.

See **VOLLEYBALL** page 8

## Zielinski singles win leads Comp

CHICOPEE – Earlier this week, The Chicopee Comprehensive High School girls tennis team defeated West Springfield 3-2. Julia Zielinski had a long matchup with Annelise

Maguire, going three sets. She won 6-4, then lost 6-0 in the second set. She finally took the third set 6-4 to get the win. Keira O’Sullivan picked up the win in the second singles,

and the second doubles team of Juliana LaFond and Madelyn Rice won their match in straight sets to clinch the victory for the Colts. Comp is out to a 2-0 start.

# Thunderbirds suffer loss against Laval

LAVAL, QC – The Springfield Thunderbirds (29-33-3-2) witnessed history from their leading scorer, but an offensive surge from the Laval Rocket (32-28-6-2) was too much, as the home team emerged with a 7-4 win on Saturday afternoon inside Place Bell.

The matinee affair doubled as a day at the fights in the first 2:45 of the game, as two separate scraps elevated the temperature on the two benches and throughout the Place Bell crowd. First, Sam Bitten came to the aid of his brother Will after the elder Bitten took a sturdy check from Tobie Bisson. Six seconds after Sam and Bisson scrapped, Brayden Guy made an impression in his second Thunderbirds game as he scored a winning decision in a tussle with Laval penalty minute leader Riley McKay.

Things did not get off on the right foot for the T-Birds, as a net-mouth scramble just 4:04 into the contest saw Mitchell Stephens open the scoring, jamming a forehand through Vadim Zherenko and giving Laval the 1-0 edge. That goal came moments after Zherenko made a marvel-

ous sliding blocker save on a Stephens one-timer in the opening minute.

The Rocket and their raucous crowd were hoping to run Springfield out of the rink just 3:17 later when 2023 fifth-over-all pick David Reinbacher stepped up in the offensive zone to the right circle and uncorked a post-ringer under the bar to make it a 2-0 game on the rookie's second AHL goal.

Despite the early stumbles, the T-Birds stayed with the program. At 11:06, with an abbreviated power play, Mikhail Abramov connected from the low slot off a centering feed from Hugh McGing, cutting the Laval lead in half. Ryan Suzuki nearly equalized the game just seconds later when he slipped behind the defense, but Rocket netminder Jakub Dobes stood up to Suzuki with a sturdy blocker save.

Despite the Suzuki chance at Dobes' end of the rink, Zherenko continued to have a far busier period than the Laval goalie. To his credit, the T-Birds' second-year backstop stabilized and helped Springfield kill off a pair of abbreviated

Rocket man-advantages to keep the 2-1 score intact after 20 minutes.

The T-Birds began the second period on another power play, and after a brief 5-on-3 ended, Adam Gaudette got the game evened up with a wrister from the right side just 1:03 into the middle period. The goal, his 39th of the season, brought him back into a tie with Samuel Fagemo of Ontario for the AHL goal-scoring lead.

Springfield, however, could not vault to the lead, and before long, the Rocket had scored two more to take a 4-2 advantage on goals 1:06 apart from Arnaud Durandeu and Philippe Maillet.

Down but unfettered, the T-Birds again showed resolve. Gaudette drew a penalty shot after being held on his way in on goal on a breakaway. With a chance to become the first man in the AHL to reach 40 goals this season, Gaudette made no mistake, deking to the backhand and roofing a shot over Dobes to make it 4-3 at 11:40. The sharpshooter's 40th goal also marked the first time since 1990-91 that a Springfield AHL player recorded 40 goals in a single season.

Gaudette's marker also lit a fire under his team. Just 45 seconds later, Abramov whistled a cross-seam pass to a crashing Joey Duszak, who beat Dobes to tie the game, 4-4, at 12:25.

The 4-4 tie carried into the third, but an unfortunate break wound up putting Laval back in front for good. After Leo Loof fearless blocked a shot up near his face, the loose puck landed flat at the feet of Durandeu, who snapped it into an open net before Zherenko could locate it, and the Rocket lead was restored, 5-4, at 6:37 of the third.

This time, a third comeback was not in the cards for Springfield, as Stephens added his second and third goals of the night with a power-play redirect at 10:25 and an empty-netter with 1:11 remaining to finish the scoring. Stephens finished the night with three goals and two assists.

The T-Birds are next in action on Friday, April 12, when they begin a three-game weekend in Hartford against the Wolf Pack. Puck drop is set for 7 p.m. at the XL Center.

## Registration now open to take part in Bay State Games

WOBURN – Registration for the 42nd annual Bay State Summer Games is now open. The 2024 Summer Games will include thirty sports with competitions from May 11 – July 27 at venues throughout eastern and central Massachusetts including Game On in Fitchburg, Boston Sports Institute in Wellesley, Union Point Sports Complex in Weymouth, and North Star Ice Sports in Westborough. Bay State Games participants range in age from 5 to over age 75 and represent more than 300 Massachusetts communities as well as surrounding New England States in some sports. From grassroots participants to accomplished amateur athletes, the Bay State Games provide opportunities for the athlete in all of us.

Seven high school showcase sports will take place for a variety

of sports, including baseball, basketball, field hockey, ice hockey, soccer, softball, and volleyball. Athletes currently in grade 8-11 who live or go to school in Massachusetts are eligible to attend regional tryouts during the month of June. These tryouts will determine teams representing the various regions of the Commonwealth that will compete against each other in July. Check each sport page for specific eligibility requirements.

The Summer Games include a wide variety of individual sports including swimming, track & field, figure skating, pickleball, wrestling, weightlifting, badminton, and more. These sports are open to a wide range of ages and skill levels from youth participants to masters-aged athletes. Adaptive sport divisions in archery, swimming, and track &

field are offered, as well. Bay State Games also organizes tournaments for pre-existing teams in rugby, and 6v6 field hockey.

Returning in 2024, Table Tennis will take place on June 1 at PingPod in Boston after a 5-year hiatus from the Summer Games sport lineup. New venues include Babson College, which will host the Girls Basketball Showcase, and NorthStar Ice Sports, which will host Figure Skating and the Girls Ice Hockey Showcase. Game On in Fitchburg will serve as a hub venue for eight sports. Bay State Games expects 1,500 athletes and their families to attend competitions at Game On during the second week of July.

For questions, email info@baystategames.org or call 781-932-6555.

### VOLLEYBALL from page 7

They also had a 2-0 league record.

The Brownies only setback this season was at Needham, 3-1, in the season opener. Needham, who's the defending Division 1 state champion, entered this week's action riding a 75 match winning streak.

Eleven Agawam players had at least one kill against Comp. Sophomore Joe Culhane led the way with seven kills.

It was also a memorable night for Agawam sophomores Michael Lukomiski, Aiden Therrien, Elijah Ramos, and Chase Gerani, who played in a varsity volleyball match for the first time.

"Those four guys were pretty excited to play in their first varsity match tonight," Pender said. "They've been working very hard at practice all season long. I thought tonight's match would be a very good opportunity for them to see some playing time."

The two seniors listed on the Agawam varsity roster are Emil Zhmaidziak, and Ezekiel Nguessan, who are co-captains. The Brownies also have four other returning varsity players.

The Colts, who are a young squad, had a 2-2 overall record and a 0-2 league record following last Friday's match.

"We do have a very young squad and every match that we'll play this year will be challenging for us," said Comp head coach Brittany Dussault. "I thought we played very well in tonight's match. We still have some things that we need to work on."

The two seniors listed on the Colts varsity roster are Pavel Kiriukhin and Edrien Roman, who's one of the captains. Sophomore Daniel Gauthier is the other captain.

Comp sophomore Chace Murphy, who had a team-high five kills, along with sophomore Alex Rivera, sophomore Josue Hernandez, and Gauthier, were members of a club volleyball team coached by Pender this past winter.

"Comp is a much better team than their record shows," Pender said. "Four of their players played on my club team during the winter. I've built a good relationship with those guys, but I was a little bit nervous facing them in tonight's match."

The Brownies held the lead for almost the entire opening set. A combined block by junior Dominik Wurszt and sophomore Noah Johnson gave the visiting team the lead for the first time at 16-15, which forced Pender to call a timeout.

Agawam responded by scoring the next five points with junior David Dzhenzherukha handling the serving duties. Junior Dennis Nessen contributed with a kill and a block during that stretch.

The Brownies capped off the first set with a kill by Zhmaidziak, who didn't play in the state finals because of an injury.

"Emil has returned with a lot of passion," Pender said. "He's one of our leaders this year."

There were a couple of lead changes at the start of the second set before Agawam built a 12-7 with the help of a 7-2 run.

The Colts closed the gap to 15-14 before the Brownies pulled away down the stretch.

There were seven ties in the third set, but the Brownies managed to win the final three points of the contest. Two of them were kills by junior Eric Nazarets.

The Colts will be trying to even the season series when they host the Brownies on May 1.

## Historical Society presenting research tools talk

CHICOPEE - The Chicopee Historical Society presents a program about simple research tools and handy resources to use when exploring local history. The talk by Society President Chet Kobierski will illustrate how to research town and neighborhood history, family history and genealogy, and will answer questions on easily available

methods to search popular topics.

Jacqueline T. Lynch, local author and Society member, will also be selling her recently published books: "A Tragic Toast to Christmas: The Infamous Wood Alcohol Deaths of 1919 in Chicopee, Massachusetts"; and the novel "The Little Engine That Killed." The setting for both books is Chicopee Falls. A

portion of the proceeds from sale of the books will be donated to the Chicopee Historical Society.

Join us Wednesday, April 17 in the Bazan Community Room of the Chicopee Public Library, 449 Front Street, Chicopee, at 6:30 p.m. The event is free and open to the public.

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## Chicopee Public Library Hosts Programs for Kids and Families

CHICOPEE - Each month the Chicopee Public Library hosts a variety of free programs for children and families. The Youth Services Department seeks to provide opportunities for entertainment and enrichment that explore literacy and promote creativity. Here is the slate of events for April 2024.

On Tuesdays, April 16 and 30, at 10:30 a.m. in the community room, the library will have a Little Kid Dance Party geared for kids 5 and under and their caregivers. Older kids are welcome, as well. There will be songs, dancing and big movement!

The Library's All Ages Playgroup will be held in the children's room each week on Saturday from 1-2 p.m. While the children's room playspace is always available to kids and families visiting the library, during playgroup there are extra toys to explore. It is a great time for families to meet up and play.

Little Movers will be held in the children's program room on Fridays, April 12 and 26 at 11 a.m. Babies crawling to 24 months and their caregivers are invited to join us for free play followed by circle time exploring songs, fingerplays and movement!

The library will host several fun events for April School Vacation Week (April 16-19).

On Tuesday April 16, a drop-in Craft will be available in the Children's Room between 2:30 and 4:30 p.m. Kids and families can make a spring bird craft with mixed media collage.

On Wednesday, April 17 at 10:30 a.m., Talking Hands Theatre will perform "Race Cars", a puppet show about a race between an electric car, a hybrid car and a gas-powered car. Who will win the mystery prize? No matter who wins, they'll all need to work together to spell out what it is! This show focuses on early literacy and is recommended for ages 2-6. This performance is supported by the Chicopee Cultural Council, a local agency, which is supported by the MA Cultural Council, a state agency.

Also on Wednesday, April 17, kids and families can play Bingo for Books at 2:30 p.m. Listen to the numbers and letters, mark off your bingo card, and maybe win a book as a prize! Library staff will host as many rounds as folks can play in an hour.

On Thursday, April 18, there will be a Pokémon Party in the Children's Room! Kids, teens and families are invited to stop by for activities and a scavenger hunt from 2:30 - 4 p.m.

The library will also host events for teens in April. Teen events are for middle and high school students, ages 11-18.

Teens are invited to a Throwback Thursday event on April 25 at 2:30 p.m. Childhood nostalgia is on offer with fun games, coloring, and the giant parachute.

The Nintendo Switch will be ready to play in the library's Teen Space after school on Tuesdays 2:30 - 4:30 p.m. in April. (Not including school vacation week). Teens can play Press A to Play, Super Smash Bros Ultimate, Warioware, and more!

For more information about the Chicopee Public Library, go to [www.chicopeepubliclibrary.org](http://www.chicopeepubliclibrary.org).

## RiverMills Center Transportation Services available to seniors

CHICOPEE - The Chicopee Council on Aging's Transportation Department provides rides to the senior center, doctor's offices, supermarkets, pharmacies, etc. for Chicopee older adults.

Transportation service is available Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Reservations must be made at least five business days in advance by calling 413-536-5733.

A \$7,875.00 grant from WestMass Eldercare has allowed the senior center to expand its transportation offerings. Shopping Trips are funded in part by a Title III/Older Americans Act grant from WestMass Eldercare, with support from the Mass. Executive Office of Elder Affairs and the Federal Administration for Community Living. There is no charge for this service, but participants are welcome to make a voluntary, confidential donation for a shopping ride.

To learn more, contact Nicholas Wosko at 413-536-5733 or [NWosko@Chicopeema.gov](mailto:NWosko@Chicopeema.gov).

### CHICOPEE CITY COUNCIL ZONING COMMITTEE LEGAL NOTICE

The Zoning Committee of the Chicopee City Council will hold a public hearing **Wednesday, April 24, 2024 at 6:30 PM\*** in the Chambers, 4th floor, City Hall Annex, 274 Front Street., Chicopee, MA 01013 to discuss the following:

Special Permit application under Chapter 275-30 (B) for the purpose of installing one 20'x10' conex storage box and moving the existing one 20'x10' conex for more storage at the Public Safety Complex located at 110 Church Street. Applicant - City of Chicopee, David Rice, 274 Front Street, Chicopee, MA 01013.

The plans/application can be viewed on the City Council website <https://www.chicopeema.gov/880/Pending-Applications>

The April 24, 2024 Zoning Committee hearing shall be available to the public via zoom and in person. Zoom credentials are available upon request by calling (413) 594-1435 M-F 8:30 AM - 5 PM or by email at [aczarniecki@chicopeema.gov](mailto:aczarniecki@chicopeema.gov).

The petition and materials related to this proposal are on file in the Office of the City Council, Chicopee City Hall, 274 Front Street, (plans and applications are also available on the City Council website <https://www.chicopeema.gov/880/Pending-Applications>. You may also call (413) 594-1435 or email [aczarniecki@chicopeema.gov](mailto:aczarniecki@chicopeema.gov). 04/05, 04/12/2024

### CHICOPEE CITY COUNCIL ZONING COMMITTEE LEGAL NOTICE

The Zoning Committee of the Chicopee City Council will hold a public hearing **Wednesday, April 24, 2024 at 6:30 PM\*** in the Chambers, 4th floor, City Hall Annex, 274 Front Street., Chicopee, MA 01013 to discuss the following:

Special Permit application under Chapter 275-58 C (4) for the purpose of restaurant with full service liquor license located at 1329 Memorial Drive. Applicant - Zengxin Ouyang, 131 Viscout Rd., Longmeadow, MA 01106.

The plans/application can be viewed on the City Council website <https://www.chicopeema.gov/880/Pending-Applications>

The April 24, 2024 Zoning Committee hearing shall be available to the public via zoom and in person. Zoom credentials are available upon request by calling (413) 594-1435 M-F 8:30 AM - 5 PM or by email at [aczarniecki@chicopeema.gov](mailto:aczarniecki@chicopeema.gov).

The petition and materials related to this proposal are on file in the Office of the City Council, Chicopee City Hall, 274 Front Street, (plans and applications are also available on the City Council website <https://www.chicopeema.gov/880/Pending-Applications>. You may also call (413) 594-1435 or email [aczarniecki@chicopeema.gov](mailto:aczarniecki@chicopeema.gov). 04/05, 04/12/2024

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Probate and Family Court 50 State Street Springfield, MA 01103 (413)748-7758**

**Docket No. HD24A0040AD**  
In the matter of:  
**Evelynn Rose Serwanski CITATION G.L. c. 210, §6**

TO:  
**Ian Richard Serwanski**  
any unnamed or unknown parent and persons interested in a petition for the adoption of said child and to the Department of Children and Families of said Commonwealth.

A petition has been presented to said court by:

**William Galarza of Chicopee, MA**  
**Susan Galarza of Chicopee, MA**

requesting for leave to adopt said child and that the name of the child be changed to

**Evelynn Rose Galarza**  
**If you object to this adoption you are entitled to the appointment of an attorney if you are an indigent person.**

An indigent person is defined by SJC Rule 3.10. The definition includes but is not limited to persons receiving TAFDC, EACDC, poverty related veteran's benefits, Medicaid, and SSI. The Court will determine if you are indigent. Contact an Assistant Judicial Case Manager or Adoption Clerk of the Court on or before the date listed below to obtain the necessary forms.

IF YOU DESIRE TO OBJECT THERETO, YOU OR YOUR ATTORNEY MUST FILE A WRITTEN APPEARANCE IN SAID COURT AT **Springfield** ON OR BEFORE TEN O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING (10:00 AM) ON: **05/06/2024.**

WITNESS, **Hon. Barbara M Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.

Date: March 25, 2024  
**Rosemary A. Saccomani**  
Register of Probate  
04/12/2024

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Probate and Family Court 50 State Street Springfield, MA 01103 (413)748-7758**

**Docket No. HD24C0119CA**  
In the matter of:  
**Makenna Rose Macomber CITATION ON PETITION TO CHANGE NAME**

A Petition to Change Name of Minor has been filed by **Makenna Rose Macomber of Chicopee, MA** requesting that the court enter a Decree changing their name to:

**Makenna Rose Walaszek IMPORTANT NOTICE**

Any person may appear for purposes of objecting to the petition by filing an appearance at: **Hampden Probate and Family Court before 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 05/09/2024.**

This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance if you object to this proceeding.

WITNESS, **Hon. Barbara M Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.

Date: April 04, 2024  
**Rosemary A Saccomani**  
Register of Probate  
04/12/2024

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Probate and Family Court**

**50 State Street Springfield, MA 01103 (413)748-7758**  
**Docket No. HD24A0039AD**  
In the matter of:  
**Olivia Paige Serwanski CITATION G.L. c. 210, §6**

TO:  
**Ian Richard Serwanski**  
any unnamed or unknown parent and persons interested in a petition for the adoption of said child and to the Department of Children and Families of said Commonwealth.

A petition has been presented to said court by:

**William Galarza of Chicopee, MA**  
**Susan Galarza of Chicopee, MA**

requesting for leave to adopt said child and that the name of the child be changed to

**Olivia Paige Galarza**  
**If you object to this adoption you are entitled to the appointment of an attorney if you are an indigent person.**

An indigent person is defined by SJC Rule 3.10. The definition includes but is not limited to persons receiving TAFDC, EACDC, poverty related veteran's benefits, Medicaid, and SSI. The Court will determine if you are indigent. Contact an Assistant Judicial Case Manager or Adoption Clerk of the Court on or before the date listed below to obtain the necessary forms.

IF YOU DESIRE TO OBJECT THERETO, YOU OR YOUR ATTORNEY MUST FILE A WRITTEN APPEARANCE IN SAID COURT AT **Springfield** ON OR BEFORE TEN O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING (10:00 AM) ON: **05/06/2024.**

WITNESS, **Hon. Barbara M Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.

Date: March 25, 2024  
**Rosemary A. Saccomani**  
Register of Probate  
04/12/2024

### CHICOPEE CITY COUNCIL ZONING COMMITTEE LEGAL NOTICE

The Zoning Committee of the Chicopee City Council will hold a public hearing **Wednesday, April 24, 2024 at 6:30 PM\*** in the Chambers, 4th floor, City Hall Annex, 274 Front Street., Chicopee, MA 01013 to discuss the following:

Ordinance Amendment to add Chapter 275-73 No further business, commercial or industrial development shall occur on James Street from the intersection of James Street and Memorial Drive to the beginning of Syrek Street and any appurtenant Street for one year. Applicant -

Derek Dobosz (former Ward 6 Councilor) and Councilor Mary Beth Pniak-Costello (Ward 9).

The plans/application can be viewed on the City Council website <https://www.chicopeema.gov/880/Pending-Applications>

The April 24, 2024 Zoning Committee hearing shall be available to the public via zoom and in person. Zoom credentials are available upon request by calling (413) 594-1435 M-F 8:30 AM - 5 PM or by email at [aczarniecki@chicopeema.gov](mailto:aczarniecki@chicopeema.gov).

The petition and materials related to this proposal are on file in the Office of the City Council, Chicopee City Hall, 274 Front Street, (plans and applications are also available on the City Council website <https://www.chicopeema.gov/880/Pending-Applications>. You may also call (413) 594-1435 or email [aczarniecki@chicopeema.gov](mailto:aczarniecki@chicopeema.gov). 04/05, 04/12/2024

### CHICOPEE CITY COUNCIL ZONING COMMITTEE LEGAL NOTICE

The Zoning Committee of the Chicopee City Council will hold a public hearing **Wednesday, April 24, 2024 at 6:30 PM\*** in the Chambers, 4th floor, City Hall Annex, 274 Front Street., Chicopee, MA 01013 to discuss the following:

Zone Change application from Res B to Bus A for 51,835 square feet of property located at 22 Grove Avenue and 0 Grove Street (Parcel ID 0125-00026 & 0125-00029) for the purpose of parking lot, new construction, restaurant, commercial kitchen, housing. Applicant - Ridvan Turan, 185 Grove Street, Chicopee, MA 01020.

The plans/application can be viewed on the City Council website <https://www.chicopeema.gov/880/Pending-Applications>

The April 24, 2024 Zoning Committee hearing shall be available to the public via zoom and in person. Zoom credentials are available upon request by calling (413) 594-1435 M-F 8:30 AM - 5 PM or by email at [aczarniecki@chicopeema.gov](mailto:aczarniecki@chicopeema.gov).

The petition and materials related to this proposal are on file in the Office of the City Council, Chicopee City Hall, 274 Front Street, (plans and applications are also available on the City Council website <https://www.chicopeema.gov/880/Pending-Applications>. You may also call (413) 594-1435 or email [aczarniecki@chicopeema.gov](mailto:aczarniecki@chicopeema.gov). 04/05, 04/12/2024

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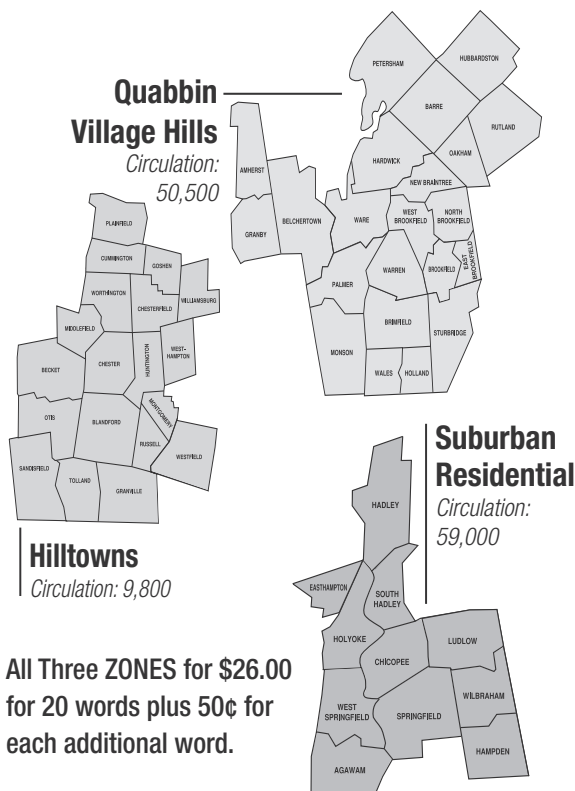
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# Meet our families: The faces behind the Habitat homeownership mission

By Brandice J. O'Brien  
Marketing and Communications  
Manager, Greater Springfield Habitat  
for Humanity

WEST SPRINGFIELD - Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity (GSHFH) recently celebrated its newest homeowner. Single mother Antonia Santos purchased a 1,500-square-foot colonial home in Holyoke for herself and her four youngest children. Like her predecessors and someday successors, Antonia came from a challenging background in which homeownership would not be attainable through traditional means.

Greater Springfield Habitat believes its homeownership mission is a crucial foundation for any family. By moving out of substandard housing and into a Habitat home, homeowners and their families become more likely to improve their health, attain a better education, and increase their safety and personal wealth.

"I think we all gain inspiration from our partner families to continue helping others become homeowners," said Olga Callirgos, GSHFH Homeowner Programs coordinator. "It isn't easy to overcome language barriers, health issues, domestic violence, or any other bumps in the path of life, but yet it has made our partner families more driven and dedicated to a fresh start."



Antonia's keys to new house.

Antonia and her children are survivors of domestic violence. After leaving an abusive husband, Antonia sought help from nonprofits to get a fresh start. She found counseling, training, and employment. She learned to live by a budget, save regularly, give back to the community, and build a support system through her work and church families.

"It has been a hard road, but I made it. No, we made it, my family and me," said Antonia at the Valentine's Day dedication, a ceremony celebrating the completion of the new home's construction. She closed on the house the next day. "God is good. He has blessed me tremendously, especially with my family and the opportunity to partner with Habitat for Humanity to help make my dreams

come true."

In January 2023, Greater Springfield Habitat sold a home, which neighbors Antonia's residence, to a family of four. Life-long renters Juan Gonzalez and Ireydiza Perez purchased the home to give their two young children better lives.

Several years before they partnered with GSHFH, Juan and Ireydiza dreamed of purchasing their first home through traditional means. Then, tragedy struck. A workplace injury disabled Juan, the breadwinner. Following several surgeries and two strokes, their dreams were put on hold. Juan was unable to return to work. Ireydiza left school to become the sole breadwinner, and create time to care for their children and her recuperating husband.

"I know we all experience



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Driss, Madja, whole family by banner.

unexpected hardships in our life and these times are when our trust in God is tested," Juan said. "After my stroke and losing my career, my family and I got tested. I didn't think getting a house for them would be possible. Thanks to Habitat for Humanity, y'all are making our dream come true. ... Not only do you build houses and sell them at affordable prices, but you also save lives through this program. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for giving us the opportunity to be homeowners."

In September 2023, Greater Springfield Habitat accepted the newest family into the homeowner program - Driss and Majda Errahali with their four children. The family emigrated from Morocco in 2018 in search of better opportunities. They lived in a house in West

Springfield until a car crashed into the home causing structural damage. It was condemned and the family was moved to a tiny two-bedroom apartment in the same town. The girls who are 8- and 11-years old share one bedroom, while the Driss, Majda, and the two youngest boys share the other bedroom.

"We applied through the homeownership program to get a home so that our children would have a better life," said Driss, the patriarch who works as a truck driver, while his wife Majda cares for the children. "My dream is for my children to be good people and useful to society and do good deeds for the environment and achieve their dreams."

Construction on Driss and Majda's home is scheduled to begin this spring.

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# IN THE CITY



Bill Stetson, owner of Rumbleseat Bar & Grille, smiles as he holds a kitten during the Adoption Fundraiser Event to support Halfway Home Cat Rescue Inc. on March 28.



A poster board showcases information about Halfway Home Cat Rescue Inc., a nonprofit organization supporting cats and kittens, during their Adoption Fundraiser Event at the Rumbleseat Bar & Grille on March 28.



A banner for Halfway Home Cat Rescue Inc. on display inside Rumbleseat Bar & Grille.



A close-up shot of foster kittens sleeping and playing, and one looking right at our camera.



Foster kittens inside a carrier during the Adoption Fundraiser event at the Rumbleseat Bar & Grille on March 28.



A close-up of a foster kitten being held during the Adoption Fundraiser event.



An attendee holds a foster kitten during the Adoption Fundraiser event at the Rumbleseat Bar & Grille on March 28.

## FELINE from page 1

cue Inc., expressed elation at the turnout.

"This is more of a success than I was expecting," Fiskaa said.

Bill Stetson, owner of Rumbleseat Bar & Grille, explained he and Fiskaa met to talk about the event, calling it a win-win for all.

"Every single person in here is smiling. Everyone's having a good time. There's kids here, there's people who never walked through my door before," Stetson said. "Her followers and her Facebook page people got exposed to my business and kind of how we operate and a lot of my customers that didn't know anything about

Halfway Home Cat Rescue got exposed to the organization and all the good that it does." Fiskaa agreed.

"I'm happy that we can bring customers in here and do this. We would love to do it again. This is so amazing," Fiskaa said.

Carleen Mullin oversees social media for Halfway Home Cat Rescue, sharing she was speechless at the community support.

Mullin expressed gratitude to Stetson and Rumbleseat for their partnership.

"We have so many fosters that came out here today just to advocate for their cats and helping them find homes and I talked to so many people and I met so many people," Mullin said. "It's just wonderful."

Kaitlin Joseph has been a foster mom alongside her mother and two daughters since 2020, calling the experience "very fun" and "a lot of work."

Joseph was thrilled with the community coming out for the event, having met so many people and being able to raise funds for the organization.

"I like having the project of it. I like that there's always something to do, there's always somebody to snuggle (with.) You can sit down on the couch and there's always somebody right there in your lap purring. It's wonderful," Joseph said.

Joseph said anyone who is interested in fostering can check the Halfway Home Cat Rescue Facebook page to apply.

"It's just great whether you take on a litter of kittens or you just have a place for a single adult," Joseph said.

Fiskaa wants the community to know the organization is dedicated to cat and kitten rescue and they love interacting with the community.

"It's nice to just be working with Billy and having a place to do this," Fiskaa said.

Stetson hopes the event gets the word out about the organization.

"Everything that they do is about goodness, helping the cats and kittens," Stetson said. "Everybody in this place is smiling and happy. Cats make people happy."

Fiskaa encouraged residents

to check out events like this in the future and consider supporting them.

"The next time they see an event, come on out. Support us, support local businesses like the Rumbleseat and just to get involved," Fiskaa said.

Mullin added this message on other ways to support them.

"Even if you're not looking to adopt, even if you can't financially afford to support a fundraiser, just share our posts. Sharing it with other people is a way to support us without any financial investment," Mullin said.

To learn more, visit the Halfway Home Cat Rescue Inc. Facebook page.

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