

YEAR IN REVIEW

REMEMBERING from page 9

he was younger," Grenon said. "What he did have, he would give to anyone who needed it. More, so he always dreamed of helping others in a big way. (The foundation) was his way and his vision of being able to help people who cannot make ends meet, the poorest of the poor, the needy and also the homeless in our area who have nothing."

Currently, the foundation is growing as it follows the direction set by Joslyn. Beyond western Massachusetts, the foundation delivers food and money to two community partners in Haiti.

Locally, a recent outreach event drew 45 volunteers. Maisonave is confident that the foundation has potential to further expand its impact.

"People call us that have emergencies where they need financial support immediately. We don't have any red tape," Maisonave said. "By serving others and getting out of your own self, everything that you were going through can change. It just got better. By (Joslyn) serving others, he brought positive energy and got positive energy back."

When asked what her father would have made of last Friday's fundraiser, Grenon expressed her belief that he was present in spirit.

"He's with us always, and he makes it very known. I know that he's smiling so big right now seeing how things are coming to fruition even though he's left the world," Grenon said.

AUGUST

National Night Out, bigger than ever

By Dalton Zbierski
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CHICOPEE – An estimated 3,000 people travelled Sarah Jane Park on Monday to enjoy National Night Out 2022.

By evening's end, there was no question that the event drew the largest attendance in its history, locally.

"It's an amazing success. We are so proud of our city. All of our city departments stepped up and helped us tonight. It's about building relationships with our community, our kids and our families and really getting back out there after COVID," Police Captain Holly Cote said.

Cote organized the event alongside



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Reynaldo Caraballo, 6, hopped aboard a city vehicle at National Night Out.

Fire Lt. Katie Kalbaugh and Rachel Beau-lieu of the Mayor's Office.

National Night Out is an event held all throughout the country on the first Tuesday of August each year. The annual gathering was introduced nationally in 1984 and has evolved into a community-building campaign, building camaraderie between the police and public.

Chicopee has celebrated National Night Out for a number of years, but the event was impacted in 2020 and 2021 by the pandemic. On Aug. 1, National Night Out did more than return to normal; it was bigger and better than ever.

"I look at it as being post-pandemic right now, and it's the feeling. As much as COVID is still out there, we've learned to live with it. People understand that we can do that. Chicopee loves to gather, and we're a very social city so tonight's just the epitome of what we do well," Mayor John Vieau said, after estimating the attendance.

The majority of the city's departments were on hand Tuesday, as were several nonprofits and members of the business community.

Law enforcement and public safety personnel arrived from across the state. The State Police, Hampden County Sheriff's Office and Westover Police and Fire all presented vehicles and equipment; the State Police helicopter even landed on the football field adjacent to the park.

Ward 1 City Councilor Joel McAuliffe declared the event the largest it has ever been. For an event designed to break barriers of communication, he was excited to see such diverse community participation.

"Chicopee has been historically known as a melting pot, and it continues to be so," McAuliffe said. "Our demographics continue to change. It's something that we're embracing as a community. No matter your background, where you come from

or the language you speak, you're all part of the Chicopee community, and you're seeing it tonight."

Fire Chief Dan Stamborski described the night as "beautiful."

He said that the kids love to climb aboard the fire trucks and try on the equipment. He considered National Night Out to be a great experience all around, one that can prove beneficial in the future.

"I'd rather meet (kids) in this type of environment than in an emergency situation. Maybe if they meet us here tonight, the police and fire, maybe when we do have to come to their house, they're not nervous and maybe a little more comfortable," Stamborski said.

SEPTEMBER

Contributions recognized at RiverMills Center

By Dalton Zbierski
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CHICOPEE – City officials joined residents at the RiverMills Center on Sept. 8 to remember several outstanding community members who helped lay the foundation for the new facility on West Main Street. .



STAFF PHOTO BY DALTON ZBIERSKI

Family and friends of Frances Wilkins helped unveil a plaque in her honor at the RiverMills Center on Sept. 8.

The well-attended ceremony recognized the contributions of Frances Wilkins, Adele Tawrel, Sandra Lapollo and Marjory Lafleur.

Last Thursday, the Frances Wilkins Garden Patio was officially dedicated.

Through the Frances Wilkins Charitable Fund, the Friends of Chicopee Senior

Citizens, Inc. was given \$40,218, which was used to create the patio behind the senior center.

Born in 1924, Frances Wilkins was a 1941 graduate of Chicopee High School. A dedicated wife, mother and member of the PTA, Wilkins came to love the senior center later in life.

"She went to the (facility) in Aldenville. Her favorite activity was line-dancing. She loved to do that," Dr. Carol Wilkins Kuralt, Frances Wilkins' daughter, said.

Steve Wilkins, Frances Wilkins' son, spoke on how important the senior center was to his mother.

"My mother often talked about this facility here, and it meant a lot to her that she was able to do something for the community by donating some money here for this patio," he said.

Speaking on behalf of Mayor John Vieau, Mike Pise, Vieau's Chief of Staff, spoke highly of Frances Wilkins' contributions and praised the dynamic of the outdoor patio space.

"It's a place for individuals to meet, take a break, gather, socialize and enjoy the outdoors as we are today. It's a great spot to relax, recharge and refresh yourselves. We're thankful she was able to do this for us," Pise said.

Adele Tawrel came to the center as a volunteer in 1993 and became President of the Friends the following year. She served in the position until 2016 and led the Friends as it worked to raise \$2 million towards building the new facility.

A tree and plaque honoring Adele Tawrel was placed in the garden near the patio. She will long be remembered for helping make the new facility a reality.

"Starting as a receptionist and going on to be President of Friends, she found her happy place, but she, as well as many others, knew they needed a new and bigger home away from home. Asking the Friends to pledge \$2 million towards this goal was always a 'can do.' So began the journey and fulfillment of a dream," Susan Tawrel, Adele Tawrel's daughter, said.

A fountain and plaque were dedicated to Lapollo on Sept. 8. Lapollo served as Executive Director of the senior center for 27 years before retiring in 2017.

Pise said Lapollo "was committed to the seniors and wanted to make sure that the city built a center like RiverMills that had all of the amenities and all of the offerings we have today that we're all very proud of."

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