

Woodbridge Town News



Woodbridge's Exclusive Newspaper

Mailed Free To Every Home in Woodbridge
Mailed Free To Every Home & Business in Woodbridge & Bethany

VOL. 12 – ISSUE 2

CIRCULATION 3654

FRIDAY, MARCH 10, 2023

CAPSS Winners

Principals of Amity schools recently presented students with the annual CAPSS (Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents Awards) to honor students who do well academically and are valuable members of their community. Here are the winners of this year's awards and what impressed the administration:

Amity Middle School – Bethany

Tiari Young (Team Black) is a positive peer role model and a diligent student. She has displayed resilience and independence academically, always striving for peak performance in everything she tries, including achieving all grades in the A range in seventh grade. She participates well in class, is an enthusiastic learner, and displays an inherent talent for performance. To this end, Tiari was featured backstage in our school musical, Matilda Jr. this year and her stage crew performance was outstanding. Tiari can also be enjoyed through her performances in Advanced Strings, where she plays beautifully.

Maintaining a healthy balance in her life, Tiari is also involved in our No Place for Hate club, which encourages positivity and acceptance in our community. Overall, Tiari is awesome.

Riley D'Andrea (Gold Team) is a role model for other students not only through his strong academic performance, but also as an active Amity community member. As a seventh grader Riley completed the school year with almost all A's for the year, and this trend has continued in eighth grade, demonstrating Riley's consistent work ethic and dedication to academic excel-

lence. He can always be counted on to work well with his peers, offer support when needed, and take on leadership opportunities

Outside of the classroom, Riley has dedicated time to the community, particularly at the AMSB annual Color Run, for which Riley helped to encourage others to attend, helped raise money for the PTSO, and helped to set up and clean up before and after the event. He is also a member of the AMSB cross country team and is a leader on the Midstate Rugby team.

Riley is a huge support at home as well, tutoring his younger brother in math, and he can be relied on by his neighbors to help take care of pets and watch the home when they are away. Most of all, Riley is kind, caring, and embodies the Be AMITY acronym; he is always his best self.

Amity High School

Anchal Bahel serves as the class president for the Class of 2023 since her sophomore year of high school, and this year she also serves as the co-chair of the ARHS Student Government's Principal's Committee. As the chair of this committee, Anchal is responsible for developing the agenda and running the bi-weekly meetings between the principal and the 20-member student committee to address issues of school climate as well as collaborating with the principal to author the Student Happenings newsletter of school events that is sent to all students weekly.

In other areas of school life, Anchal is a four-year member of the selective

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A 'Missed Opportunity'

MAYOR INTERVENES IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS' DISPUTE OVER REIMBURSEMENTS

BY BETTINA THIEL

WOODBRIDGE TOWN NEWS CORRESPONDENT

New Haven Mayor Justin Elicker had strong words for the Woodbridge Board of Education when he, along with two representatives of the New Haven School District, personally addressed the Woodbridge board at its February 27 meeting to chide them over their decision back in January not to offer two Kindergarten slots to children from New Haven as part of the Open Choice Program. He asked the board to reconsider that decision.

Due to snow the evening of the meeting, it was held virtually.

In a carefully worded statement that he read in order to meet the board's three-minute public comment policy, Elicker called it a missed opportunity to show "that you care about ending racial and ethnic isolation, that you are committed to ending segregation and want to work together with neighboring towns on this goal. You've done the opposite with your choice, and I ask you to reconsider," he said.

Open Choice is a state-wide program that allows urban students to attend public schools in nearby suburban towns. The Woodbridge school district has been participating for many years, and is currently offering 18 slots to New Haven students. Later this year, two sixth graders enrolled in the program will graduate, opening two slots for incoming kindergarteners. But this year, the board decided to not offer those slots, essentially cutting back on the number of participating students.

At the root of the disagreement is

how the home district reimburses the host district, especially when it comes to special education services rendered. Donna Coonan, the director of Finance and Operations in Woodbridge, informed the board that the New Haven District had reimbursed Woodbridge for transportation and other special services, yet it had not paid for further interventions it had provided. Last year, the Woodbridge district billed New Haven for \$265,000, but received only \$131,000.

She said she found out that while New Haven does not pay the host districts for special services, the Hartford school district does.

Tyfan Jackson, her counterpart in the New Haven school district, pointed out that they have met with Woodbridge officials in the past to work it out. "To be stating that New Haven is not paying for its special ed students, that information is grossly inaccurate," she said. "We have and continue to pay for reasonable cost."

Jackson also called out the Woodbridge district for discrimination, saying, "We cannot preclude students with disabilities," from entering the lottery for the Open Choice slots. "It is unfair to preclude (students) simply because of their disabilities."

Like Mayor Elicker before her, the New Haven Magnet school administrator, Michele Bonanno, pointed out that not only do the suburban districts accept students from New Haven, but

See "Opportunity" On Page 16



HOULIHAN LAWRENCE

WARECK D'OSTILIO

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NEW LISTING

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Ross Cotjanle 203-401-1993



NEW LISTING

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Claire Sullivan 203-605-1943



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 <p>Lisa Crosby 203-906-8861</p>	 <p>Darrell Hardy 203-589-1434</p>	 <p>Marianne Roday 860-303-6940</p>	 <p>HOULIHAN LAWRENCE WARECK D'OSTILIO www.wareck.com</p>	

“Awards” From Page 1

Science Research Program, and her research has led to opportunities for her to partner with researchers at the Yale University School of Medicine and to have an article published in Arthroplasty Today. She is a reporter and the News Section Editor for the ARHS student newspaper, the President of our National Honor Society chapter, team captain of our Academic Decathlon team, vice president of the Amity Connections peer mentoring program, a peer tutor, a member of the National English Honor Society, and an orientation leader for our Link Crew program.

Anchal is also an active member of our community outside of school, serving on the Woodbridge School District Strategic Planning Team, founding a company called Student Stress Solutions, and working to advocate for leadership roles for girls in science and government.

Francis Cavallaro serves as the Student Body President for the ARHS Student Government, a role that has him in charge of the efforts of our 100-member student government to improve the quality of life and school-wide programs for students. In this role he has served as a student repre-

sentative on last summer’s Principal Selection Committee, as the master of ceremonies at our return-to-school pep rally at the start of the year, as a student representative to the PTSO, and as a liaison between the student government and the school administration.

In other areas of school life, Frank has been a four-year member of our selective Science Research Program and is currently a semi-finalist for the Coca-Cola Scholarship due to his independent research in this program, is a four-year member of our cross-country, basketball, and volleyball teams, serves as the co-president of our Robotics team, is a member of the National Honor Society, and helps support the transition to high school for our newest students as an orientation leader for our Link Crew program. Frank is also an active member of the community outside of school. He is an Eagle Scout in Troop 12 Milford, has served as a student representative on the Town of Orange Youth Services Committee since 2018, and is a head coach and worship leader for the Trinity Church Sports Camp.

Allen Liu stands out across the board with his high academic achievements, leadership, and involvement. He has consistently taken the hardest

classes that Amity offers, including 11 AP classes. Allen was also selected to be a part of our Science Research Program all four years, where he is conducting experiments in renewable energy. With a love of computer science, Allen taught himself a variety of coding languages, took courses in the subject, and now uses his knowledge and passion as a programming coach for a youth robotics team. He also started and is co-president of the Amity Hack Club, spent the last three years as the tech coordinator for Student Government, is the web designer for the Woodbridge Together club, and is the president of the Amity Chess Club.

Athletically, Allen is a captain of the Amity swim and dive team and is part of a club swim team as well. Allen also works as a lifeguard and elementary swim instructor. Additionally, Allen shows leadership as a Link Crew Leader, helping with our high school transition program. Allen is a bright and engaged student who has a great future ahead of him.

Nina Carmeli is a well-respected and visible member of the student body who is involved in a wide variety of activities in both the school and the community. A four-year member of Student Government, Nina currently serves as the social media coordinator. She has also served on the Principal’s Committee and is currently the Community Outreach Committee chairperson. Nina is the founder and president of the Inclusion at Amity club, which focuses on making Amity a more inclusive, accepting, and diverse community. She is also a member of the Trident staff, currently serving as the Arts Section chief editor. Nina is also an active participant in the Girl Up club, No Place For Hate, Peer Tutoring, and Link Crew.

She has worked hard to earn membership in National Honor Society, National English Honors Society, National Spanish Honor Society, and Tri-M National Music Honors Society. Outside of Amity, Nina is committed to her passion for music and is also very active at her temple. Nina’s commitment to studying violin for the past 10 years has resulted in numerous experiences and accomplishments. She is the third chair first violinist in the Greater New Haven Youth Orchestra, first violinist in a local quartet, violinist in the Temple Emanuel Band, and has participated in the Southern Regional Music Festival for three years.

At Temple Emanuel, Nina serves as a Hebrew School teacher and serves as the student representative on the Temple Emanuel Board of Directors. Nina takes great pride in these impressive accomplishments.

Grace Mahon is a visible member of the Amity community through athletics, theater, and service opportuni-

ties. Currently, she serves as president of Class Act Council, designed to empower schools and their students to take ownership for all issues related to sportsmanship within the athletics department.

Additionally, Grace is co-president of Amity Unified Theater where she is responsible for leading typical peers and members of the SAILS program in theater related activities. A two-year member of Link Crew, Grace enjoys her role as a mentor to incoming freshmen. Regarding athletics, Grace has participated in Outdoor Track for the past two years where she was a state qualifier in High Jump.

Grace’s greatest commitment was to swimming. A four-year member of Amity Swimming and Diving, she served as the captain this past season and has received All-State recognition for multiple years. She also participates in a Club Swim team outside of school. Her passion for the sport has led to her commitment to continue swimming next year at the University of New Hampshire.

In the artistic realm, Grace has been involved in theater as a cast member in each of the Amity Spring musical productions. She also volunteers as a camp counselor for the Amity Creative Theater summer camp.

Aside from school activities, Grace is active in her church, where she volunteers for community events and participates in the Appalachia Service Project in West Virginia. Grace’s diverse interests keep her energized and connected to her community.

Katherine “Katie” Sim is a standout in the Class of 2023! Katie is leaving Amity a better place than when she arrived. Academically, Katie works tirelessly to be an engaged and successful member of her challenging courses. In 2022, Amity awarded Katie the Lasell University Book Award for her academic and community service efforts.

Taking AP Environmental Science course raised Katie’s awareness of sustainability and she helped start an Amity Club that collected unused cafeteria food that was to be thrown away and they dropped it off at a local homeless shelter. Amity Connections, our peer mentor program is robust today and it would not have been so successful without Katie’s eagerness to make it happen. Katie was a founding member and has been a leader throughout her time, serving as vice president her sophomore year and president in both junior and senior years. This program means a lot to Katie, and she has helped market, plan, and execute the peer mentor model. Katie is also a two-year member of the Amity’s Link Crew and Chinese National Honor Society.

Outside of Amity, Katie babysits for a local family and works at a Cape Cod boutique. Katie Sim will be missed!



Reading Pioneer Celebrates 100 at Coachman Square

On February 20, Goldie Mintz celebrated 100 years of life surrounded by her friends, family and over 150 cards from former students and friends at Coachman Square at Woodbridge. Senator Cabrera presented her with a citation recognizing her over 40-year career as a teacher. In the 1950s, her love of her faith led her to help found both a Temple and a nursery school.

When she recognized her students were having trouble reading, she pioneered a new method of learning, Organic Reading, for which she won a state award. After Goldie retired to the New Haven area in the early 2000s, she became a beloved volunteer tutor for many years in the New Haven Public School system where she taught kids to read.

JUDY COOPER

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Spring, and warmer weather is just around the corner! With that comes another baseball season in Woodbridge. “Opening Day” is scheduled for Saturday April 29th. Many thanks to the Beth-Wood Baseball League and its president Dwight Rowland for another generous donation this year to offset expenditures by the Parks Department. The \$3,000 donation will assist the Town’s efforts to perform miscellaneous safety improvements at our Town ballfields, cover certain expenses for overtime incurred by the Parks Department employees related to use of the fields, and cover the additional costs of portable restrooms during baseball tournaments.

The month of March is National Disabilities Awareness month, a wonderful opportunity to remind residents that our website at www.woodbridgect.org aims to be user friendly with assistive technology and compatibility with many screen readers. Please contact Karen Crosby, Assistant Administrative Officer, at kcrosby@woodbridgect.org with any accessibility issues related to the Town’s website. As you know, our website is an invaluable tool for any Town information you might need.

This past month the Board of Selectmen finalized its proposed operating and capital budget recommendations for Fiscal Year 2024 and sent them to the Board of Finance. The Board of Finance has met once and will meet again on March 16 to prepare the budget proposal for the Preliminary Budget Hearing. Budget meetings may be watched live on Channel 79, and the WGATV YouTube page - please see the homepage of the Town’s website.

The best way for residents to share their thoughts and/or make suggestions on the proposed budget is to attend the **Monday, April 24 Preliminary Budget Hearing** when

From the First Selectman BY BETH HELLER



the Board of Finance will present its proposed spending plan. This meeting will take place at 7:30 pm at the Amity High School Auditorium. Following this hearing the Board of Finance may make changes to its proposed budget which will then be presented at the Annual Town Meeting on May 15 at the Amity High School Auditorium at 7:30 pm. I continue to stress the importance of resident involvement in our budget process – please make every effort to be informed and participate. We need your voice!

At its February meeting, the Board of Selectmen approved the updated Strategic Plan document as presented by Selectmen McCreven and Vogel. This plan has identified priorities among the most important and pressing issues facing the Town of Woodbridge. You may view the plan in its entirety at the Town’s website. The federal ARPA monies, distributed nationally as part of the American Rescue Plan Act “Build Back Better” funds, were also proposed for use in four important areas which have been identified. Woodbridge has received close to \$2.6 million, and there are specific guidelines in which they may be used. The Board of Selectmen voted to distribute \$1,314, 568 to our Business District revitalization, \$334,000 toward renovation of the former Firehouse, \$333,000 toward improvements at the Center Grove, and \$333,000 to complete renovation of the Center Gymnasium (including HVAC improvements for this most important indoor town meeting/gathering space). Additionally, last spring \$275,000 was provided for the Senior

Center HVAC renovation.

At our February Board of Selectmen meeting, I appointed a small subcommittee to interview potential planner/consultant candidates, one of whom will be chosen to assist the full Board in developing an RFP (Request for Proposal) for the former Country Club of Woodbridge (CCW) property. This committee will consist of Selectmen Paul Kuriakose and David Vogel, myself, and Administrative Officer/Director of Finance Tony Genovese.

I am pleased to share with you that a 55+ housing proposal has been approved by both the Town Plan and Zoning Commission and the Inland Wetlands Agency. This project, located at Litchfield Turnpike and Bradley Road, will move forward with construction set to begin this month. The design features attached townhouses with 2-3 bedrooms set on private roads with a community center and pool on the premises. Toll Brothers estimates construction will be completed in 3 years. This development will grow our Grand List, but not add to the enrollment of our schools.

The Ad Hoc 2030 Task Force continues to work on taking a big picture look at the changes the town should consider for diversifying and broadening our Grand List. The bipartisan Task Force, with co-chairs Chris Dickerson and Susan Jacobs, has previously concentrated on connectivity in the business district to maximize potential grant dollars to offset expenditures. The Board of Selectmen moved ahead at the February 8 Board of Selectmen (BOS) meeting, unanimously accepting the Ad Hoc Com-

mittee’s recommendations, and authorizing our Administrative Officer/Director of Finance Tony Genovese to seek State and Federal grants. Federal grants may be available through President Biden’s bipartisan Build Back Better Infrastructure Program. The Task Force will present strategies on placemaking and other ideas for the Business District at the April 12th Board of Selectmen meeting.

Our Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance have unanimously approved the request for replacement of pool filters and associated equipment as well as the transfer of current Recreation Department funds to cover this cost. I continue to believe that the Beecher Road School pool is an asset to our community. It provides a vast range of programs for development of community swimmers - a vital life skill for our children - including the “Learn to Swim” programming through the school and lessons through the Recreation Department. These programs also act as a feeder system for the Amity High School Swim Team and the Woodbridge Aquatic Club. The pool provides a recreational outlet and opportunity for the continued health and well-being for all community members.

Finally, I am delighted to let you know that our wonderful Town Library staff has stepped up to coordinate Town-wide events such as Earth Day 2024, Woodbridge Like Me Day, and this year’s Rid Litter Day to be held on Saturday, April 22. As we have had several staff changes over the past few months, we have taken the opportunity to examine resources and reallocate department assignments related to Town events.

As always, please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you have questions or comments at bheller@woodbridgect.org or at 203-389-3401.

Housing Group to Engage People in Small-Group Settings To Start A Conversation

BY BETTINA THIEL
WOODBRIDGE TOWN NEWS CORRESPONDENT.

The Woodbridge Housing Committee is planning a series of small community gatherings with the goal of feeding into a larger conversation about housing opportunities – or the lack thereof. Through SCROG, the South Central Regional Council of Governments, the committee has engaged a consultant, Ben Fink, who will coach them to lead these gatherings.

Fink’s method of engaging people and coaxing them into actual conversations around divisive topics is to engage participants to share their experi-

ences before they are invited to share opinions. “You want to make a space for people to be able to share where people know they’re not going to be interrupted, they will be honored,” he told the committee in a virtual meeting on February 15. The intention is to create a safe space, with as close as possible to perfect equality. Everybody in the room must be willing to share, but at the same time everybody will be heard.

“You bring people in, not based on their belief, but based on their commitment to the place where they live,” he said, adding what a participant in Oxford had said to him recently in a

similar exchange, “You can disagree with someone’s opinions, but you can’t disagree with their experience.”

The first group to be invited into this conversation will be comprised of conservation groups – the Conservation Commission, Land Trust and the Park Association. Subsequent groups may include senior citizens; churches; the Rotary; commissions, small neighborhood groups, the historical society, and others.

The stories people share should be in response to a prompt and should be personal in nature. Example: “Tell a story about a moment when you or

someone you care about struggled to make a home.” Not surprisingly, that prompt did not resonate with the folks in the meeting, who could not think of a story to share.

Fink’s method for a successful conversation is to share experiences, then present information and finally, discuss next steps. He said the sharing of personal experiences could be following a more formal “story circle” or allow for a more informal format.

The goal is to make people feel comfortable talking to each other about challenging topics that will eventually include housing.

“If you’re Irish, it doesn’t matter where you go - you’ll find family.” — VICTORIA SMURFIT

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Circulation of 3,654.

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1126, Orange, CT 06477
Phone: 203-298-4399

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Editor Marlene Silverstein
Production & Design J. Michael Kriz
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Woodbridge Town News

Below are the next three issue dates & deadlines of the Woodbridge Town News.
Thank you for your submissions to Your Home Town Newspaper.

Upcoming Issue Date	Issue Deadline
April 7 Easter & Passover Issue.....	March 31
May 5 Mother’s Day Issue	April 28
May 26 Memorial Day Issue	May 19

Note: Copy due by 4:00p.m. Thank you.

FROM OUR READERS

Wish Lists vs. Town Needs

I have been a lifelong Democrat, but find myself agreeing with many of the points in Chuck Pyne’s “Other Side of the Aisle” column regarding the town’s priorities. In the February 10th issue, I read how we have hired consultants to improve the business district in order to grow the grand list. Then I read in “The First Selectman’s “column that budget requests have increased by 10% while our grand list has only increased by 1%. Then, we hear about the two different Beecher Road School committees which will be grappling with a number of large and very expensive issues that are coming up.

However, the article driving me to Mr. Pyne’s side of the aisle is the Old Firehouse proposal. I have always thought the conversion of this building to a community/cultural center

was completely unnecessary, but I realize most people supported it because it was a state grant that would pay for said conversion. Of course, a state grant is our money - it is not free money. Nevertheless, it is the outdoor amenities proposed that have grabbed my attention and prompt me to write. A heated outdoor pavilion - a bocce court - (more) community gardens - outdoor reading spaces - (you can’t read in your own yard?) - phone charging stations! All these outdoor proposals will apparently - per the article - NOT be paid for by the state grant. Are you kidding? Who will pay for these unnecessary and extravagant extras?

The town leaders need to look really hard at people’s wish lists and decide on what the town NEEDS vs. what might be nice to have.

Jack Ciccolo

Woodbridge Town News

WTN LETTERS POLICY

Submit your letters for our "From Our Readers" section to:
Woodbridge Town News, P.O. Box 1126, Orange, CT 06477
or email: letters@woodbridgetownnews.com.

Please limit letters to 500 words and include a daytime phone number in case we have any questions. Letters must be exclusive to the Woodbridge Town News for publication. We reserve the right to reject any letter.



OPINION

**From the Democratic
Town Committee**

BY ELLEN SCALETTAR
WDTC CHAIRMAN



Get the Facts by Getting Involved

We have all heard the shocking revelations of Fox News executives’ and commentators’ intentional disregard for the truth. Behind the scenes, they repeatedly mocked the “Big Lie” that Donald Trump won the 2020 presidential election, while continuing to support this position on air. Even the Chairman of the Fox Corporation, Rupert Murdoch, had to admit under oath that Fox News hosts “endorsed false 2020 election claims.”

With millions of Americans still trusting Fox as their sole news source, it is understandable that America remains so divided. We cannot survive as a country if lies go unchallenged or are treated as “alternate facts.”

What can we do here in Woodbridge as these events unfold on the national stage? For starters, we can be vigilant locally about ascertaining facts and refuting misinformation when we hear it. But how do we get the facts about local issues and assess their accuracy?

In our small town, government is run by our friends and neighbors. We know them and talk with them. And our town government is open for you to observe and participate. All Town Board and Commission meetings are open to the public, and public comment is often part of the agenda. Written communications are made part of the record. Our Town closely follows the requirements of the Connecticut Freedom of Information laws.

Our First Selectman Beth Heller also provides regular updates through a monthly column in the *Woodbridge Town News* and in our own *Town News and Events* newsletter, both of which are sent to every household. If you

have questions or are curious about how the town works, you can explore the Town website: woodbridgett.org.

And on Monday, April 24th at 7:30 PM at the Amity High School auditorium, there will be a Preliminary Budget Hearing open to the public. This is an ideal opportunity for you to learn and ask about budget details, have input, and make suggestions for changes.

Looking further ahead, this is a local election year - the first November election for the Town. Our Town Clerk and our Registrars of Voters have demonstrated time and time again that we can count on fair, free and secure elections in Woodbridge. Our state leaders, too, have made voting rights and voting security cornerstones of our democracy in Connecticut.

The Constitutional Amendment that passed last year now allows early voting for the first time in Connecticut. While the General Assembly has not yet enacted the details on how long the early voting period will be, it is anticipated that it will be in effect for the November elections. While other states and their local governments are already hearing of misinformation campaigns, we are looking forward to the election season with confidence in our process.

The Woodbridge Democratic Town Committee is committed to protecting our First Amendment freedoms, without which democracy can neither thrive nor survive. If you are interested in learning more about the Woodbridge Democratic Town Committee, please get in touch with us by emailing us at: communications@woodbridgedems.org or visit OUR NEW WEBSITE: <http://www.woodbridgedems.org>.

From Across the Aisle

BY CHUCK PYNE
WRTC CHAIRMAN



Affordable Housing – We Must Step Up Our Game

The affordable housing issue has become, in some ways, an unfortunately divisive issue in Woodbridge. State law allows a developer to exceed density limits in local zoning law if less than 10% of the municipality’s existing housing qualifies as legally affordable. Some residents applaud the law while others critique it for failing to recognize our town’s naturally affordable housing, lack of public water and sewer access, and role as crucial public water supply watershed for the greater New Haven area. The reality is that short of a major philosophic shift in Hartford, state efforts to push more affordable housing are here to stay. So, the question is: How should our town respond? The answer: Better than we’ve done so far.

Last year every town was required to submit an Affordable Housing Plan to the state. The BOS set up an ad hoc committee and promised Woodbridge residents there would be a public hearing on the committee’s draft plan. Instead, our Town leadership reneged on that promise and submitted the plan as final to the state, without the benefit of robust public input. Selectman Sheila McCreven assured one upset resident that the plan could always be amended in response to public comment. But then the BOS Democrat majority set up a new Housing Committee to implement the plan, and never directed that committee to seek public input.

Meanwhile, flaws in our land use regulations have DECREASED the percentage of affordable housing in town rather than incentivizing private developers to build affordable housing.

Example one: the Town Plan and Zoning Commission (TPZ) recently approved a Merritt Avenue project to build fourteen duplex homes. Public comments overwhelmingly opposed approval, largely due to traffic concerns. The TPZ decided it was bound by the zoning rules and had no legal reason to deny the application. But the TPZ is the body that makes those rules! The TPZ response to the September 2020 Orchard Road application, while denied, was to recast zoning rules in several parts of town, so why didn’t TPZ include changes that would have secured an affordable housing component in this new development where public water and sewer are available?

Now, none of those 28 units will be legally affordable – so the total number of “unaffordable Woodbridge homes” just went up. Zoning regulations requiring a percentage of new development to be affordable are allowed by state law – but we missed that boat. Opportunity lost.

Example two: The new Toll Brothers project on both sides of Bradley Road along Litchfield Turnpike exhibits a similar lost opportunity. Once again, the failure of the TPZ to require a portion of the 66 units to be reserved for affordable housing drives up the number of non-affordable housing units and makes our percentage of affordable units worse. Our Town leadership might have responded by reaching out to Toll Brothers – and to the Merritt Avenue developer – offering the opportunity for positive press, tax incentives, and/or community goodwill in return for some voluntary affordable housing component. Instead, nothing.

And what about that new Housing Commission? While as a town we appreciate volunteer service on boards and commissions, the BOS should have directed them to invite and welcome public input into the rushed plan before implementing it. Instead, the entire committee seems to be like-minded in selling the town-owned former golf course to build affordable housing. The committee chair said as much in a Register article several weeks ago. The committee has held no meetings for public comment. Now, the committee is embarked on a strategy, led by a Philadelphia-based consultant, to promote the singular idea of selling the golf course and rallying support among the members of the town’s other boards and commissions.

To be clear, this is not a shot at volunteers on either the Housing Committee or the TPZ. It’s a fair, fact-based criticism of how our Democrat town leaders is handling an extremely sensitive, long-term challenge to our town. They are not doing a good job with the tools at our disposal. We need leadership that does the hard work of building consensus instead of repeatedly focusing all affordable housing efforts on the former golf course. As we approach municipal elections in November, a wholesale change in town leadership must be in the minds of Woodbridge voters.



NEWS FROM THE LIBRARY

All information accurate at press time. Be sure to check our website woodbridgetownlibrary.org or call us before your visit for any changes to our hours or events.

Library Announcements

The Richard Blackwell Volunteer Scholarship Established with The Friends of the Library

The Friends of the Woodbridge Library are excited to announce the establishment of The Richard Blackwell Volunteer Scholarship, available to graduating seniors from Amity Regional High School. Scholarships will be granted annually to students who have volunteered with the Friends throughout their high school years. Woodbridge resident and Library Commission member, Richard Blackwell, has made a generous, ongoing donation to the Friends endowing the annual volunteer scholarship. Mr. Blackwell was instilled with the spirit of volunteerism by his mother Mary and is pleased to see high school students in our community learning the value of volunteerism. Mr. Blackwell is especially excited to fund this project as he believes our town library is a community treasure. “I get enthusiastic about the library as I believe reading is the best exercise for the brain,” explained Mr. Blackwell. “Having a good book is like having a good friend!” he further explained.

In addition to his work on the Library Commission, Mr. Blackwell is an avid library user, especially in accompanying his grandchildren to library events. He also uses the emailed newsletter to discover all the Woodbridge Town Library has to offer. He would love to see more residents sign up for the library newsletter at woodbridgetownlibrary.org/#signup. Mr. Blackwell hopes to encourage both volunteerism with the Friends and participation in library programs as the library is the “Heart of Woodbridge” (Prevost, 2022).

The Friends, a volunteer-run 501(c)(3) non-profit group, seeks both adult and student volunteers. Volunteer tasks include cleaning, sorting, and stacking donated books, puzzles, and CDs in Bookstore Alley located on the mezzanine level of the library. Additionally, volunteers assist in projects such as The Friends’ gifting of books to the annual Holiday Baskets through the Woodbridge Human Services Department, the Beecher Book Swap, prison programs, family shelters, New Haven Reads, and Navajo Nation. If you are interested in volunteering or donating to The Friends of Woodbridge Library, please contact us at woodbridgetfriends@gmail.com.

SOURCE: Prevost, Lisa. “A Peaceful Rural Enclave Close to New Haven: [Real Estate Desk].” New York Times. April 17, 2022, Late Edition (East

Coast), <https://sqr.co/prevost>.

Missed the article about Woodbridge the first time? Go to the above link and read it with your Woodbridge Library card! Don’t have your card yet? Keep reading to find out how to get one online!

March Artist: Guillermo Vila, Sketches of Spain (photography exhibit)

Sketches of Spain is made possible by the artist’s decision to trek across Spain in 2022. With thirty pounds on his back and no preconceived plan, he successfully completed the 800-mile pilgrimage from Barcelona to Santiago after two months of walking. His closest companion was a fully-mechanical film camera from the 1960s. The images are results of blind presses of the shutter button along the way relying on his developed sense of composition and tenacious relationship with Faith, as well as hours of processing in his makeshift darkroom after settling back in Woodbridge. As was his journey, so too are the selected photographs a collection of small miracles. This exhibition is ultimately a celebration marking Guillermo’s debut as a public art figure.

The Woodbridge Town Library is pleased to present new art exhibits every month in the Meeting Room. These exhibits are free and open to the public when the meeting room is not in use; please stop by to view Guillermo’s photography. A reception with the artist will be held on Saturday, March 11, beginning at 2 pm.

Now for sale: Totes with Notable Quotes!

Support the Library by purchasing a tote bag. \$20 each, 2 for \$35. Six different bags, each with a different quote. Examples: “A book must be the axe for the frozen sea within us.” Franz Kafka “No need to hurry. No need to sparkle. No need to be anybody but oneself.” Virginia Woolf. Thanks to the Friends of the Woodbridge Library for their support.

New Online Card Registration Available

Are you a Woodbridge resident? You can now sign up for a library card online! Visit our website, woodbridgetownlibrary.org. After registering, you will immediately be able to use your new account to place holds on items for pick up at the library. We will then contact you via email within 2 business days with your new library card number. At this time, you will get full access to our electronic resources, including downloadable books and magazines. Please note that this is a temporary registration that will expire in 30 days. Before the 30 days is up, please visit the Woodbridge Town Library in person to verify your name and address. At that time, you will receive a permanent

library card.

From Adult Services Library Skywatch

Every Monday & Tuesday, conditions permitting (dark & clear), a reference staff member will assist the public in identifying and viewing celestial objects with our new Zhumell 1114mm refracting telescope. Join us on the Library lawn, from where we can see the Moon and the larger and closer planets. Telescope viewing starts 1/2 hour after sundown. Reservation not needed; walk-ins welcome. Contact Bill at warmstrong@woodbridgetownlibrary.org with questions.

Woodbridge Writers Workshop

Every second and fourth Tuesday of the month, from 3 to 5 pm.

Gather with area writers as we read and critique our works in a friendly atmosphere. Register online or at the library. More information on our website or call the reference desk.

Woodbridge Scrabble Group

Wednesdays at 11 AM

Meet with friends and neighbors for friendly games of Scrabble every week in the Meeting Room. No registration required.

Indoor Film Screenings

Thursdays at 7 PM

Join us on Thursday evenings for a movie screening in our Meeting Room. No registration is required to attend, but seating is first come, first serve

- › March 16: Spoiler Alert;
- › March 23: The Inspection;
- › March 30: Devotion;
- › April 6: Women Talking;
- › April 13: The Whale;
- › April 20: A Man Called Otto;
- › April 27: Missing.

Saturday Morning Meditation

Every Saturday at 10:15 am, one hour of silent Vipassana (mindfulness) meditation is hosted by experienced meditation instructors. Registration suggested, but walk-ins welcome too!

Author Talk: Dr. Siegfried Kra

Wednesday, March 15 at 2 PM

Come and join us for a talk with local author and retired cardiologist Dr. Siegfried Kra! He will be discussing his newest book, *Dancer in the Garden*, which is a collection of vivid stories from Dr. Kra’s life. Please register online or at the library.

Woodbridge Town Library Plant Swap!

Saturday, March 18 from 11 AM – 1 PM

Have plants that don’t spark joy anymore? Extra pots laying around

the house? Seeds you don’t plan on planting? Drop them off at the library 3/16-3/17. Then return on Saturday to find new (to you) items! There will also be a potting station. All ages welcome! Please register online or at the library.

Saving Money on Part D Prescription Drug Plans

Tuesday, March 21 at 2 pm

Learn about the tools that may help you find prescription drug savings in regards to your Part D Medicare coverage. With a little investigation, there are lots of ways to save! Please register online or at the library.

Peeps in the Library Diorama Contest

Join us for our 8th annual Peeps in Library contest! You can register and pick up your packet of Peeps between Monday, March 20 and Saturday, April 1. Please drop off completed dioramas by Saturday, April 8th. Dioramas will be displayed in the library starting the week of April 10th, so make sure to stop by and vote for your favorites!

Especially For Teens Teen Volunteers needed!

Check out our teen page on our website to see what volunteer opportunities are available, or email Emily Cantor, Head of Children’s: ecantor@woodbridgetownlibrary.org.

From The Children’s Department Animal Facts Club

Monday, March 13 at 6:30 pm: Ages 7+

Registration required; meets monthly. This month’s theme is extinct animals!

Graphic Novel Club

Tuesday, March 28 at 6:30 pm: Ages 9+

Come discuss the graphic novel *Big Nate* from the Top and do a fun activity relating to the book! Please register.

Black-Out Poetry Craft

Saturday, April 1, drop in from 2 to 3 pm: Ages 8+

Kick off poetry month! Look for poetry in unexpected place and make a cool poem/craft. No registration necessary.

Recurring Programs

No registration required, come as often as you’d like! Please bring an adult with you!

- › Mondays at 10:30 am: Baby Group (newborns to 18 months)
- › Wednesdays at 10:30 am: Storytime (infants to age 3)
- › Thursdays at 4 pm: Afternoon Craft Time (Ages 3+)
- › Fridays at 11:30 am, ending promptly at noon: Morning Craft Time (Ages 3 to 5, perfect for preschoolers and homeschoolers!)

WOODBIDGE EDUCATION



Woodbridge Robotics

Woodbridge has amazing talent when it comes to Robotics. This year, three teams from our town participated in the First Lego League Robotics competition: the Speedy Snakes, Backyard Bees and Brick Rollers.

First Lego League is a competition through FIRST Robotics for grades 4-8. It consists of Robot Performance, Robot Design, an Innovation Project and Core Values. This year's challenge is named "Super Powered" and centered around clean energy solutions.

At our regional competition, the Speedy Snakes received the awards for Innovation Project and achieved the high score in Robot Performance. The Backyard Bees received the Teamwork Award. For their Innovation Project the Speedy Snakes designed a modified speed bump called a "Speed Table" that can generate electricity when cars drive over it. To achieve top score in Robot Games they built

a robot using Lego Spike Prime with interchangeable attachments to solve the different challenges on the board, and coded programs to operate the attachments. They also used sensors like the Light and Gyro sensor. Both the Speedy Snakes and Backyard Bees advanced to State Championship. The Brick Rollers is our youngest team and we are excited to see what their team members will accomplish in future competitions. They entertained all with their "Brick Rolling" video.

The State Championship was held on December 10 in Glastonbury. The Speedy Snakes received second place in the State Champions Award.

Not only do kids learn about science, coding, engineering and Robotics, but Core Values forms an important part of the FIRST competition. The Core Values are Discovery, Innovation, Impact, Inclusion, Teamwork and Fun.

Amity Advances to "Sweet 16" of Global Debate Competition

Hundreds of debate teams from around the world entered the 2022-23 International Public Policy Forum (IPPF) competition, but only 16 remain – including a team of students from Amity Regional High School in Woodbridge, Connecticut. By advancing into the "Sweet 16" round, the students remain eligible to win an all-expenses-paid trip to the IPPF Finals in New York City, where the IPPF World Champion will be awarded a \$10,000 grand prize. The Amity Regional team is the only team from Connecticut to advance this round.

Sponsored by the Brewer Foundation and New York University, the IPPF is the first and only competition that gives high school students from around the world the opportunity to engage in written and oral debates on issues of public policy. "The teams advancing demonstrate excellence at research, writing, and advocacy," says William A. Brewer III, partner at Brewer, Attorneys & Counselors and a founder of the IPPF. "The 16 teams remaining will compete in a final round of written debates – in hopes of moving on to oral debates during the IPPF Finals in New York City."

The IPPF's 22nd annual competition began in October 2022, as 220 teams, representing schools in 22 countries and 31 U.S. states, submitted qualifying round essays affirming or negating the IPPF topic, "Resolved: The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is an effective model for international cooperation." Those essays were reviewed by a committee, which

determined the top 64 teams based on the overall quality of each 2,800-word essay.

In November, the top 64 teams began a single-elimination, written debate competition. Each team was assigned a position (affirmative or negative) and then volleyed papers back and forth with another team via email for the next six weeks. A panel of judges reviewed the essays and selected the winning teams. In the "Round of 64," Amity Regional High School advanced over Stuyvesant High School from New York, New York. In the "Top 32" round, Amity Regional High School advanced over The Davidson Academy from Reno, Nevada.

The "Sweet 16" round is now underway. Amity Regional High School is competing against UWC South East Asia from Singapore. The top 16 teams represent schools from 11 U.S. states, Singapore and Canada.

On March 30, the "Elite 8" teams will be announced. If Amity Regional High School advances, the team will win a trip to New York City to compete in the IPPF Finals on May 6, 2023, at the Harold Pratt House. The IPPF Finals give students the opportunity to supplement their written scholarships with oral advocacy – competing in debates in front of some of the world's foremost experts in business, law, and politics. Judges will include Brewer and New York University President Emeritus John Sexton, among others. The winning team will take home

See "Debate" On Page 9

STUDENT NEWS

Dean's/President's List Bryant University

Smithfield, RI - Bryant University is pleased to recognize Diego Rodriguez of Woodbridge for his unwavering commitment to academic excellence and achievement. Diego has been named to the fall 2022 President's List. The President's List is an academic distinction reserved for Bryant's highest achievers who earn a GPA of 4.0 for at least 12 semester hours of work. Congratulations on this outstanding achievement!

Bryant University

Smithfield, RI - Bryant University is pleased to recognize the students who have demonstrated an unwavering commitment to academic excellence

and achievement and have been named to the fall 2022 Deans' List. To earn a place on the Deans' List students must have a GPA of 3.4 or better for at least 12 semester hours of work. Congratulations to all on this outstanding achievement! Those from Woodbridge named to the Deans' List are: Daniel Carlson and Diego Rodriguez.

Clark University

Worcester, MA – The following Woodbridge students whose outstanding academic performance earned them a spot on Clark University's Fall 2022 Dean's List are: Sage J. Johnson, first honors; and Brynn B. Keevil, second honors. Students must have a GPA of 3.8 or above for first honors or a GPA between 3.50 and 3.79 for

second honors.

Emerson College

Boston, MA - Emerson College student Gabrielle McGovern of Woodbridge, CT earned Dean's List honors for the Fall 2022 Semester. The requirement to make Dean's List is a grade point average of 3.7 or higher for that semester. Gabrielle McGovern is majoring in Media Arts Production and is a member of the Class of 2024.

Endicott College

Beverly, MA - Endicott College, the first college in the U.S. to require internships of its students, is pleased to announce its Fall 2022 Dean's List students. In order to qualify for the Dean's List, a student must obtain a

minimum grade point average of 3.5, receive no letter grade below C, have no withdrawal grades, and be enrolled in a minimum of 12 credits for the semester. Tara Laugeni of Woodbridge, CT, is among those named to the Dean's List at Endicott College for the Fall 2022 semester. Laugeni is majoring in Business Management and Marketing. Laugeni is the daughter of Elise Laugeni and Greg Laugeni.

Fairfield University

Fairfield, CT - The following Fairfield University students from Bethany received Dean's List Honors for the Fall 2022 semester: Danielle Grosso, Alexandra Plaza, and Saunder L. Saf

See "Student News" On Page 10

WOODBIDGE EDUCATION

From the Amity Board of Education

By PAUL DAVIS
AMITY BOE CHAIR



Chair’s Report

Budget and Finance: At the February 13th meeting, the Amity Board of Education reviewed the Superintendent’s Proposed Budget for 2023-2024. Per the Board’s bylaw, the presentation included a review of the academic and extracurricular accomplishments from the past and current school year, and the anticipated financial needs of the district regarding facilities and the academic, athletics, and arts programs. Rooted in the Board’s vision and mission for the Amity School District and committed to the development of the BOWA Portrait of the Graduate, the proposed 2023-2024 budget is 2.93% higher than the current fiscal year budget. The practice of comparing the proposed budget with the current adopted budget is consistent with the Town Boards of Finance. It is not, however, just this year’s budget with some increases to specific items. It is constructed newly each year, line by line, with input from every district department considering the specific projected needs for the 2023-24 school year. The increase is driven primarily by contractual obligations, which increased by 2.92%, and commodities and inflationary increases. The minimal projected increase in enrollment has virtually no adverse impact on the budget. The Superintendent’s proposed budget includes additional staff to support students with disabilities, a middle school math interventionist to support academic success in mathematics, and a part-time Chinese teacher to meet student enrollment requests. The proposed budget also includes long-term, 5-year financial plans to address needs in facilities, textbook acquisition, and technology maintenance. The current modest proposal is one of the lowest in Amity’s District Reference Group (DRG), the South Central Area Superintendents’ Association (SCASA), and in surveys administered by the Connecticut Association of School Business Officials.

At that same meeting, the Board received the audit report from the 2021-2022 school year. The Board unanimously voted to credit the unexpended funds from last fiscal year to the current school year thereby reducing the District Towns’ required allotment by a total of \$711,936. This plus the unused excess funds of \$411,248 collected to cover last year’s rejected original 3.99% budget increase would effectively provide the towns with \$1,123,185 that could be used to offset Amity’s proposed allocation. Applying these funds to offset the in-

crease in the Amity budget is at the discretion of the Town Finance Committees. The Board of Education will hold a Public District Budget Hearing on April 3, 2023 and a Referendum will likely be scheduled for May 2, 2023. All registered voters in the towns of Bethany, Orange, and Woodbridge can attend the public hearing and vote to support our schools in the Amity referendum. Detailed budget information is available on the District website www.amityregion5.org/boe/budget. The Amity Finance Subcommittee and the full Board continue to review the proposed budget and expect to vote on final approval at the March meetings.

2023-2024 School Year Preparations Begin: Our Amity middle school and Amity Regional High School have started preparations for the 2023-2024 school year in earnest. On January 31, 2023, Amity Regional High School (ARHS) hosted the 8th Grade Transition Night. Approximately 500 students and parents from AMSB and AMSO came for an evening of school tours and information about academics and successfully preparing for the transition to 9th grade. In addition to performances at the Transition Night, students and teachers from ARHS visited middle school students to talk about the high school music offerings. ARHS students had an opportunity to meet with department chairs and student representatives from all departments to learn about elective offerings in each academic area during the Program of Studies Fair that was held during lunch on February 7, 2023. Throughout February, students currently in grades 9-11 will select their courses for next year from our 2023-2024 Program of Studies. Incoming 7th grade parents are invited to attend our Parent Open Houses and Orientations on March 2, 2023 at both middle schools. The program will provide information about our schools, the middle school teaming model, and an opportunity to meet some of the staff in each building. The information presented will help lay the foundation for a successful transition from elementary school to our Amity Middle Schools.

ARHS Trades Week: The ARHS Trades Week was an engaging, week-long event from February 13-17, 2023, designed to foster, promote, and teach students about careers in the skilled trade fields. All high school students had the opportunity to meet with over 20 different skilled trades people, who



Amity Advances for National Academic Decathlon Competition

On February 25, 2023, Amity Regional High School’s Academic Decathlon Team qualified for this year’s National Academic Decathlon Competition after winning the title of CT state champions. The team includes seniors Anchal Bahel, Elise Sheehee, Sophia Liu, Selin Ho, and Sena Ho, as well as juniors Bridget Lowder, Ali Khan, and Shaofei Ong and is advised by Ms. Laura Roessler.

Each year Academic Decathlon elects a theme, with this season’s focus being the American Revolution. Students had to study diligently about the relevance of this event on the nine subject areas which include science, math, literature, art, economics, social sciences, and music. In addition, each student was also required to participate in a speech, interview, and essay section which occurred online a week prior. Academic Decathlon splits students up into varying teams based on their past academic achievement, creating an honors, scholastic, and varsity category. This year, however, every member was able to be award-

ed a medal.

Khan and Ong, who are members of the varsity category, were able to win first place prizes in science, essay, literature, and interview. Bahel and Lowder competed among the Scholastic group and placed first in speech, interview, music, art, and the essay portion. Lastly, Liu and the Ho twins achieved first in essay and music, as well as second place in speech.

Team Captain Anchal Bahel shares that “this experience has been incredibly rewarding. Everyone sharing their differing strengths allowed the team to foster a community with unity and respect. I am grateful that we achieved this opportunity during my senior year. It will definitely be one to remember.” Sena Ho recalls the experience as, “a time to put to work what we had been studying and working towards for the entire year. Everyone is able to excel at different areas, and this competition allows each member to shine in their own way.”

Nationals will occur on April 28, 2023, in Frisco, Texas.

“Debate” From Page 8

the “Brewer Cup” and the \$10,000 grand prize.

The IPPF was founded in 2001 by the Brewer Foundation and is now jointly administered with New York University. The program is available to all high schools around the world – public and private – for free. The IPPF is endorsed by leading forensic agencies, such as the National Association for Urban Debate Leagues, the International Debate Education Association, the Impact Coalition, Associated Lead-

ers of Urban Debate Leagues, and the National Debate Coaches Association.

The Brewer Foundation is a private, non-profit organization funded by companies, individuals and the national litigation firm of Brewer, Attorneys & Counselors. With offices in New York and Dallas, the Foundation has achieved widespread recognition for its efforts to create, fund and manage a variety of educational outreach programs.

Visit the IPPF at www.ippfdebate.com, www.facebook.com/ippfdebate, on Twitter at @IPPF1, and on Instagram at @ippfdebate.

WOODBRIDGE EDUCATION



Michael Aversa
Photography - Gr. 10
"Hairless"
Gold Key & CAAA Best in Catagory



Amanda Koola
Photography - Gr. 11
"The other side of Me"
Silver Key



Fiona Jaimes
Mixed media - Gr. 12
"Embrassing the Frizz"
Silver Key



Nora Losty
Photography - Gr. 12
"This is Parker"
Honorable Mention



Deborah Luo
Printmaking - Gr. 11
"The Modern Empire"
Honorable Mention



Selin Ho
Painting - Gr. 12
"The Cost of Beauty"
Silver Key

Amity 2023 Scholastic Award Winners

We would like to congratulate the following Amity Regional School District High School students who placed in this year's Regional Scholastics Art Awards. The Gold Key winner will go on to compete nationally. Among those students receiving recognition were Woodbridge residents Michael Aversa, Grade 10, Gold Key & CAAA Best in Category – Photography; Amanda Koola, Grade 11, Silver Key – Photography; Fiona Jaimes, Grade 12; Silver Key – Mixed Media; Deborah Luo, Grade 11, Honorable Mention – Photography; Selin Ho, Grade 12, Silver Key – Painting; and Bethany resident Nora Losty, Grade 12, Honorable Mention – Photography.

WEA Scholarships

Education, Music, or Technology Scholarship in honor of Rick Wood: \$500.00

Awarded to a graduating Amity senior who attended Beecher Road School and is planning on attending secondary education to pursue a career in education, music, or technology. The scholarship will be awarded based on criteria exhibited within the application and overall embodiment of the spirit of BRS.

Global Citizen Scholarship in honor of Kevin Kucinkas: \$500.00

Awarded to a graduating Amity senior who attended Beecher Road School and is planning on attending secondary education in the fall. The award is based on a desire to be involved in the global community, whether that be through global issues, the environment, education, activism, or any other endeavors. The scholarship will be awarded based on criteria exhibited within the application and overall embodiment of the spirit of BRS.

Future Educator and Community Service Scholarship in honor of Ann D'Addio: \$500.00

Awarded to a graduating Amity senior who attended Beecher Road School and is planning on attending secondary education to pursue a career in teaching. This award is based on scholarship and community service. The scholarship will be awarded based on criteria exhibited within the application and overall embodiment of the spirit of BRS.

To apply for any of these scholarships, please complete a Scholarship application online at <https://tinyurl.com/4hb88d2d>. Submit this application and your response by March 31, 2023 to: weascholarship@woodbridgeps.org (make sure to include in the subject line: Your Name, WEA Scholarship Application). Awards will be announced by the end of April.

"Student News" From Page 8

Those from Woodbridge who received Dean's List Honors for the Fall 2022 semester are: Claire D. DeGennaro, Abigail J. Ressler, and Allyson G. Skolnick. In order to be placed on the Dean's List, students must have completed a minimum of 12 credit hours in a semester, have no outstanding or incomplete grades for that semester, and have attained a semester grade point average of 3.50 or better.

Hamilton College

Clinton, NY - Brian Seiter, of Woodbridge, has been named to the Dean's List at Hamilton College for the 2022 fall semester. To be named to the Dean's List, a student must have carried a course load of four or more graded credits throughout the semester and earned an average of 3.5 or above on a 4.0 scale. Seiter, a junior majoring in history and public policy, is a graduate of Hopkins School.

University of New Hampshire

Hannah Sosensky of Woodbridge has been named to the Dean's List for earning High Honors for the fall 2022 semester. Hannah is majoring in Health Management & Policy. Students named to the Dean's List have earned recognition through their superior scholastic performance during a semester enrolled in a full-time course load (12 or more graded credits). High

honors are awarded to students who earn a semester grade point average of 3.65 to 3.84.

Western New England University

Springfield, MA - Woodbridge, CT resident, Julia Vinci, has been named to Western New England University's Dean's List for the Fall 2022 semester. Vinci, is working toward a BA in Psychology, is one of over 660 students who achieved this mark of academic excellence. Students are named to the Dean's List for achieving a semester grade point average of 3.30 or higher.

Woodbridge, CT resident, Alex Wyner, has been named to Western New England University's President's List for the Fall 2022 semester. Wyner, who is working toward a BS in Computer Science, is one of over 500 students who achieved this mark of academic excellence. Students are named to the President's List for achieving a semester grade point average of 3.80 or higher.

William & Mary

Williamsburg, VA - Ava Gross from Woodbridge, CT was recently named to the Dean's List at the College of William & Mary for the fall 2022 semester. In order to achieve Dean's List status, a full-time degree seeking undergraduate student must take at least 12 credit hours and earn a 3.6 Quality Point Average during the semester.

www.WoodbridgeTownNews.com

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2

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AT THE WOODBRIDGE CENTER



Left: Kristy Moriarty and Jeanette Glicksman help distribute lunches at the Soup-er Sweet Masquerade Drive-thru in February. This event was sponsored by Coachman Square at Woodbridge and Opal Stork Home Care with a special treat provided by Hamden Rehabilitation and Health Care Center. Center: Becket Greten-Harrison, Cardiology PA and founder of Hearts at Home, provides a special presentation to a full room, on atrial fibrillation and congestive heart failure for National Heart Awareness Month. Right: Some of the crafters from the Valentine's Day Card Workshop, provided by Hamden Rehabilitation and Health Care Center, display their beautiful creations.

Are you over 55 years old? Contact The Woodbridge Center: Call 203-389-3430 or email kmoriarty@woodbridgect.org for information on all programming. Preregistration is required for all programming and events.

Facebook: Follow us on Facebook (The Woodbridge Center, Woodbridge CT) for current updates and local information. Look for fun programming photos as well.

Email blasts: Things change quickly - please make sure you are on our email blast list to receive Woodbridge Center updates. Call The Center at 203-389-3430 to subscribe.

Sponsored Lunch

For Woodbridge residents over 60 years of age

Spring Drive-thru Luncheon: Celebrate spring at the Spring Drive-thru Luncheon on April 13 from 12-1 pm. Lunch includes: choice of sandwich, ancient grain salad, and pineapple upside down cake for dessert. This drive-thru is generously co-sponsored by The Linden at Woodbridge. No charge, though donations are welcome. Please RSVP by April 6.

All Level Pinochle Players Welcome!

Anyone interested in playing pinochle or learning to play pinochle is invited to join the pinochle group on Thursdays from 1:30-4 pm. Call 203-389-3430 for more information.

Upcoming programs

Free Healthy Cooking Demo: Join Chef Toni from The Linden at Woodbridge for a demonstration on how to cook healthy meals for 1 or 2 people. Samples will be provided. The cooking demonstration will meet

March 22 from 11 am to 12 pm in the Library Meeting Room. Please RSVP by calling The Center at 203-389-3430.

Lunch Bunch Returns! Join in a social outing to lunch at Carmines di Vega in New Haven on March 29. Self-pay for your meal at the restaurant. The van leaves at 11:30 am from The Center. \$3 per person for transportation (or meet at the restaurant). Call The Center to RSVP.

Fabric Bowl Craft Workshop: Enjoy a casual crafting experience making a unique, functional, fabric bowl. All materials will be provided with personal instruction from Deb Urso of Hamden Rehabilitation and Health Care Center. This free workshop will meet on March 30 from 11 am - 12 pm in the Library Meeting Room. Please RSVP to participate.

Decoupage Egg Craft: Everyone can be a crafter while making beautiful decoupage eggs for spring during this workshop provided by Hamden Rehabilitation and Health Care Center on April 6, from 11:00 am - 12:00 pm, in the Library Meeting Room. Please call to RSVP.

Exercise

Not sure if a class is right for you? Try a complimentary class first!

Aerobics Class with Laura Richling: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10-11 am, in the Center Building gym. Come enjoy a complete cardio and strength training workout to a variety of music. Bring your own 1- or 2-pound hand weights, if you have them, to use during the class. There is a \$3 fee paid at the beginning of each class.

Pickleball: Monday through Friday, 12:30-3:30 pm, in the Center Building gym and outside 7 days/week. All levels are welcome. Call for more infor-

mation. There is an annual fee of \$20 for residents, \$25 for non-residents. Please make sure your dues are current.

Hobbies/Social

Bridge: Fridays, 1-4 pm in the Library Meeting Room.

Craft Group: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 am - 12 pm, in the Woodbridge Room of the Library. Bring your current knitting, crocheting, or needlepoint project to work on while having an enjoyable time socializing.

Painting for Pleasure with local artist Carole Abbate: Monday, 10 am - 12 pm, in the Library Meeting Room. Create your own paintings as Carole helps inspire beginners to intermediates to paint with acrylics or watercolors. Paint the subject of your choice-bring in a note card or photo for inspiration. No experience necessary. Call to sign-up for this 6-week, \$36 class. Class will be prorated.

Pinochle: Thursdays, 1:30-4 pm in the Center Building, room 16.

Services offered

For Woodbridge residents only

Tech Tuesday and Thursday, 2:45-4:15 pm: Need help navigating your computer, laptop, tablet, or smart phone? Call to sign-up for a 1:1 session in The Center's computer lab with patient, knowledgeable, Amity High School student volunteers. No charge.

Computer Lab: Multiple computers and laptops are located in room 11 of the Center Building Human Services corridor, which is open Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, 10 am - 2 pm. Printing is available (first 5 pages free).

Transportation: Those over the age of 60, or who are temporarily or permanently disabled, may call to ar-

range car or wheelchair accessible van transportation to medical appointments to 17 surrounding towns, local grocery shopping, banking, pharmacy pick-up, and social engagements. This service is provided Monday - Friday from 9:00 am - 4:00 pm on a first call, first serve basis. Appointments may be made up to three months in advance. Vehicles are cleaned between each use. Masks are required.

Meals: Healthy, well balanced, flash frozen meals for \$5.25/meal are available. Order by noon on Monday for delivery to your home during the same week. Choose from a wide variety of options including baked ziti, chicken piccata, flounder Florentine, and turkey pot pie. Meals include a roll, fresh fruit, and dessert. Two meal minimum order with a ten-meal limit. See website (<https://woodbridgect.org/541/Lunch-Meal-Programs>) for a complete list of offerings.

Frozen soups are available for \$1.50 per 10 oz. container. Varieties include: Italian wedding, beef orzo, minestrone, harvest vegetable, lemon chicken and rice, and many more. Call 203-389-3430 to place your order.

Friendly Visitor Program: Call Judi Young, Senior Social Worker, at 203-389-3429, to arrange for a friendly visitor.

Medical Loan Closet: Durable medical equipment, including walkers, wheelchairs, knee rollers, shower chairs, and more, is available for lending. Donations of transport chairs are needed. Call for details.

Job Bank: Residents may call Nancy Pfund, Youth Services Director, at 203-389-3429, to hire a student worker. Schedule now for spring clean-up, party assistance, baby-sitting, and more.

“Being Irish, I always had this love of words.” — KENNETH BRANAGH

TOWN DEPARTMENTS & AGENCIES

Youth Services

BY NANCY PFUND



Adrenaline Rush Obstacle Course is scheduled for March 31st Sixth Grade Meet & Greet. (Photo from 2022 Meet and Greet.)

Woodbridge Youth Services News
Call 203-389-3429 or email npfund@woodbridgect.org or youthone@woodbridgect.org for information or to sign up for programs. Like us on Facebook: <https://facebook.com/WoodbridgeYouthServices.CT>

Bethwood 6th Grade Meet and Greet-Update
Youth Services is inviting Bethany and Woodbridge 6th grade residents to a fun party on Fri., March 31st at Amity Middle School-Bethany (190 Luke Hill Road) from 7:00 to 9:00 pm. It is an excellent opportunity for the students to come together before they transition to middle school. There will be refreshments, a raffle, a DJ, and the inflatable “Adrenaline Rush Obstacle Course.” The fee is \$7. Please call 203-389-3449 or email Youthone@woodbridgect.org to register. Sponsored by Woodridge Youth Services and the Town of Bethany.

Volunteers Needed
Adults and high school juniors and seniors are needed to help at the 6th Grade Meet & Greet at Amity Middle School Bethany. Please call Woodbridge Youth Services to sign-up. We approve community service hours.

Woodbridge First Selectman’s Youth Award
If you know a Woodbridge youth (18 or under) who has worked to improve the Town of Woodbridge or has assisted its residents, please

nominate that deserving youth for the First Selectman’s Youth Award. School counselors, peers, school principals, and group leaders are encouraged to make nominations. Parents and family members may not nominate relatives. Nominations are due by April 3. Find the nomination form at the Town’s website.

Woodbridge Job Bank Seeks Teens Who Want Work
The Job Bank in Woodbridge offers occasional jobs to teen residents (ages 13 – 18) who would like to work for Woodbridge residents to earn money. Youth Services provides an opportunity to learn about the interview process, safety on the job, and how to negotiate pay. Improve your communication skills and gain experience. Do snow shoveling, yard work, spring clean-up, babysitting, dog walking, etc. Call for an interview at 203-389-3464 or e-mail npfund@woodbridgect.org. Masks and social distancing may be required.

Teens Need Jobs
Woodbridge residents who wish to hire someone for odd jobs like snow shoveling, babysitting, yard work, moving boxes, etc. Save your energy and keep teens working to gain experience. Call 203-389-3464 for more information.

Volunteers Needed
The Woodbridge Youth Advisory Board makes recommendations for Youth Services programming and

Recreation News



Youth Program Registration
There is still time to register for Spring Woodbridge Rec. Youth Programs. Most programs begin the week of March 27. Programs include: bowling, basketball, ultimate team sports, chess, Clay Date, gymnastics, Kids Dig Farms—Massaro Farms program, field hockey, flag football, Kumon, Little Scientists, running club, tennis and taekwondo. For registration information, call 203-389-3446 or register online at woodbridgect.org. Visit the website for a complete listing of the program’s schedules.

WRD Wellness & Health Fitness Center expands its hours:
The Center is now open Monday through Friday 9 am to 12 noon. This was added to the existing hours of Saturday and Sunday 8am to 12 noon. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 4 pm to 9 pm. Tuesday and Thursday 6 pm to 8:45 pm. The Wellness & Health Fitness Center is located in the Center Building.
Adult Programs available: For registration information, call 203-389-3446 or register online at wood-

bridgect.org.
T’AI- CHI – Thursday evenings. 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm – Adults – ongoing registration.



YOGA – Gentle- with Diane King- Adults- Mon. and Wed. morning classes 10:30 am to 11:45 am, and Mon. evening classes available, 5:30 pm to 6:45 pm - ongoing registration.
YOGA – with Bill Banick- Adults- Daily mornings 8:30 am to 9:45 am, and Tuesday evenings available 5:30 pm to 6:45 pm. Ongoing registration.
BADMINTON - Adults -Wednesday evenings, 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm—ongoing registration. Drop in or memberships available.

Summer Concert Sponsor: Each year, the Town seeks corporate sponsors to help defray the costs of the concerts. If you would like to donate, contact the Recreation Department for the available sponsorships. Sponsors will be recognized at the concerts and will be listed on the Town website.

seeks to include a more diverse membership to support our diverse population. A few positions remain open for adults and high school students. Community Service hours will be approved. Interested residents may contact Youth Services for information.

BOWDAAC-Let’s Talk Prevention
BOWDAAC (Bethany, Orange, Woodbridge Drug/Alcohol Action

Committee) is a grant-funded Local Prevention Council serving the communities of Bethany, Orange, and Woodbridge. Its mission is to reduce underage drinking and substance use by promoting awareness through educational programs and community collaborations. New members are welcome. For more information or to join our committee, email info.bowdaac@gmail.com or check out our website www.bowdaac.org

TOWN DEPARTMENTS & AGENCIES

HUMAN SERVICES

Masks and COVID Test Kits available: Contact Woodbridge Human Services if you would like to pick up a few medical, or KN95 masks. COVID home test kits are also available. Please no walk-ins.

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA): Tuesdays, 9 am - 12 pm. VITA is a free tax preparation service available to individuals who are income qualifying, to people who have a disability, and to those who speak limited English. For more information regarding required tax documents and to schedule an appointment, call 203-389-3429. The program will run through April 11.

Energy Assistance Program: Human Services is accepting appointments for residents applying for the 2022-2023 CT Energy Assistance Program administered by TEAM, Inc. Income eligibility requirements must be met. For information or to schedule an appointment, call Judi Young at 203-389-3429.

Food Pantry: Residents in need may call for access to non-perishable food each month. If interested in donating, the food pantry needs coffee, canola and olive oil, jams/jellies, canned chicken, laundry soap and personal hygiene products such as deodorant, toothpaste, razors, and shampoo. With imminent changes in Federal Food Assistance through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), it is anticipated that food banks will have to help families bridge the gap. Donations of gift cards to local grocery stores are also welcome.

Birthday in a Bag: Human Services is providing a new way to give back to the community. The Birthday in a Bag program collects common items used for celebrating a birthday and provides a bag with these items to local families in need. Please consider donating to this program- it's a great way to make a positive impact on a local family. Requested items for each gift bag are cake mix and frosting, candles, birthday decorations and party plates, cups, and napkins. Please check expiration dates and make sure

all packaging is sealed.

Needed! Medical Loan Closet: Transport wheelchairs, in good working order, are needed for the Medical Loan Closet. Please contact Human Services to donate.

Survey Participants Wanted: Woodbridge's community partner TEAM, Inc. has asked for assistance from residents to complete their 2023 Community Needs Survey. The survey includes questions regarding jobs, childcare, health care, and more. Please use this link, <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/D5ZT5JT> if you are interested in helping with this agency's direction in the years ahead. Respondents will be entered in a raffle to win a \$100 gift card!

How to help earthquake victims in Turkey and Syria: Many of us are wondering how to help the people in Turkey and Syria who have been affected by the February 6 earthquake which devastated vast regions of both countries. The 7.8-magnitude earthquake has claimed the lives of over 47,000 people.

While there are lists of charitable and humanitarian organizations that are part of the relief effort, to one Woodbridge couple, the mission to help is personal. Ilknur and Eser Akdeniz of Woodbridge are from Iskenderun in Hatay Province on the Mediterranean Coast of Turkey. In February 2023, Iskenderun was heavily damaged by earthquakes and subsequent floods and fires. It was one of the hardest hit locations with a high death toll and much infrastructure destruction.

Ilknur and Eser are collecting medical supplies, blankets, baby clothes, baby food, hygiene kits, feminine hygiene products, coats, socks, underwear, and thermal clothing. They plan to send all the collected supplies directly to their region for distribution there.

Emergency donation collection boxes are located inside the Town Hall at the front entrance and inside the Center Building gym entrance through March 31.



Left to right: Enos Pearse (12-04-1984), Robetsy Quinones (08-26-1997) and Liston "Sonny" Gauthier (07-10-1993)

Commercial Burglary Arrests

During the month of January 2023, the Woodbridge Police Department responded to nine (9) forced entry commercial burglaries in the lower Amity Road and Litchfield Turnpike area(s). Based on their investigation, and with the assistance of the New Haven Police Department, detectives identified the suspects responsible for the burglaries and arrest warrants were submitted to New Haven Superior Court. A total of three (3) individuals were arrested and charged accordingly.

Arrested on January 27, 2023 for his involvement in one of the burglaries, which occurred earlier that morning, was Enos Pearse, age 38, of New Haven. Pearse was charged with 53a-48/53a-103 Conspiracy to Commit Burglary 3rd Degree. Pearse was released and assigned a court date of February 10, 2023 in New Haven Superior Court for arraignment.

Arrested on February 22, 2023 for her involvement in the burglaries was Robetsy "Betsy" Quinones, age 25, of New Haven, and formerly of North

Carolina. Quinones, who was in Department of Correction custody at the time of her arrest, was charged with three (3) counts of 53a-103 Burglary 3rd Degree, two (2) counts of 53a-125b Larceny 6th Degree, and one (1) count of 53a-117 Criminal Mischief 3rd Degree with a total of \$15,000.00 in court set bond. After processing, Quinones was turned back over to the Judicial Marshals for her arraignment in New Haven Superior Court.

Arrested on March 2, 2023 for his involvement in the burglaries was Liston "Sonny" Gauthier, age 29, of New Haven, and formerly of North Carolina. Gauthier, who was in Department of Correction custody at the time of his arrest, was charged with seven (7) counts of 53a-103 Burglary 3rd Degree and six (6) counts of 53a-125b Larceny 6th Degree with a total of \$130,000.00 in court set bond. After processing, Gauthier was turned back over to the Judicial Marshals for arraignment in New Haven Superior Court.



ATTENTION WOODBRIDGE RESIDENTS!

Have an Upcoming Birth Announcement, Anniversary, Engagement or Wedding?

Send it to us with a photo and we will publish it FREE.

Woodbridge Town News, P.O. Box 1126, Orange, CT 06477
Email: edit@woodbridgetownnews.com

CLUBS & ORGANIZATIONS



Troop 410 News

Troop 410 is a Scouting troop for girls in grades 6-12. We currently have Scouts from Woodbridge, Hamden and Orange in our troop, but we welcome girls from any town. We welcome all faiths and backgrounds. We have weekly troop meetings on Tuesday evenings and an outing or campout every month. This can include camping and outdoor activities or cultural outings like visiting an art museum or historical site. We have done many service projects, like Scouting for Food to help stock the Woodbridge Food Bank and trail maintenance with the Woodbridge Land Trust.

A few examples of recent weekend activities are:

- › In November we had a visit from NCAT (New Haven Coalition for Active Transportation) at our troop meeting to teach us about bike safety, bike maintenance and bike etiquette. Then we embarked on a bike ride on the Farmington Canal Rail Trail. We were lucky to have perfect weather!
- › In December we were invited to attend a day at a rifle shooting range, learning about gun safety and trying our hand at target shooting.
- › In January we spent a Saturday at the annual Klondike Derby. We built a shelter from objects found nearby, competed in tomahawk and knife throwing competitions, and sled races. We tested our Scouting skills during

the orienteering challenge and fire building competition.

- › Our February outing was Interstellar Nights after dark tubing at Powder Ridge tubing park.

We have exciting plans for the months to come. In March we will have a cabin camping and skiing weekend. May will be a hiking and camping trip, while in June we will celebrate summer with a laid-back beach camp at Hammonasset State Park. We are also starting a hiking program. This will start with “mini-hikes” locally to work towards a more challenging “high adventure” hike on the Appalachian Trail.

Every year we attend Camp Sequassen, the Connecticut Yankee Council’s resident summer camp in New Hartford, CT. Scouts from all over New England stay for a week or more with their troop. While at camp you can choose from a selection of fun merit badges. The camp also has a nice waterfront with many water-related merit badge choices, including Swimming, Small Boat Sailing and Fishing. Watercraft are available to paddle around the lake in afternoon free time.

Any interested girls are welcome to attend a troop meeting to find out more. At this time, girls in 5th grade and up are welcome to join before the end of the year, allowing them to attend summer camp with the troop. For more information, please contact enrenavantonder@gmail.com.



Can Dietary Shifts Create A Sustainable Food Future?

Much has been made of the rising global population and the effects that the increase will have on the planet. Though estimates regarding the global population by 2050 vary considerably, the World Resources Institute notes that finding ways to sustainably feed what could be an additional two to three billion people pose a number of challenges for the agricultural sector. One such challenge is meeting those demands while lowering emissions. The WRI notes that shifting to healthier, more sustainable diets could be part of the solution to that problem.

According to the WRI, consumption of beef, lamb and goat is projected to rise by 88 percent between 2010 and 2050. Beef is the most commonly consumed ruminant meat, and that could pose a problem as the global population expands rapidly between now and 2050. That's because beef is the most resource-intensive ruminant meat to produce. Beef requires 20 times more land and emits 20 times as many greenhouse gases per gram or edible protein compared to plant

proteins like lentils, beans and peas. Shifting to diets relying on plant-based proteins, including lentils, beans and peas, could help to dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reduce the need for more agricultural land. The WRI asserts that preventing the expansion of agricultural land could help save more lands for forests, which can play an important role in combating climate change as the 21st century progresses.

A widespread shift to a plant-based diet is unlikely to happen overnight, but there are steps the agricultural sector and governments working in partnership can take to promote such a shift. The WRI recommends actions to improve the marketing of plant-based foods and efforts to improve meat substitutes, which are already readily available at many grocery stores. Policies that favor consumption of plant-based foods is another step governments can take as they work toward creating a sustainable food future for a global population that figures to expand considerably between 2023 and 2050.

Agriculture and Food Security

The world faces many unique challenges in the decades to come, including a rapidly expanding global population. The United Nations estimates that the global population will reach 9.71 billion in 2050. That's an increase of more than 1.7 billion people between 2023 and 2050.

Food security is among the more significant challenges the world will face as the population increases. The United States Agency for International Development notes that food security means all individuals, regardless of their physical or economic circumstances, have access to sufficient food to meet the dietary needs for a productive, healthy life. Food security is a more significant issue than people may recognize, even in first world, fully developed countries. For example, the United States Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service indicates that slightly more than 10 percent of U.S. households were food insecure at some point during 2021. In fact, estimates suggest more than 800 million people across the globe go to bed hungry every night, which underscores the seriousness of the issue.

Agriculture and food security Food security and the agricultural industry are inextricably linked. The USAID indicates that most of the people who go to bed hungry at night are smallholder farmers who depend on agriculture to make a living and feed themselves and their families. Supporting efforts to strengthen the agricultural industry can help to combat

food security, as the USAID reports that growth within that sector has been found to be at least twice as effective at reducing poverty as growth in other sectors. Much of that can be traced to the disproportionate percentage of poor people who live in rural rather than urban areas. For example, the USAID reports that 75 percent of poor people in developing nations live in rural areas.

But the poverty rate is higher in rural areas than urban areas in the United States as well. Data from the 2019 American Community Survey indicates the poverty rate in rural areas was 15.4 percent in 2019 compared to 11.9 percent in urban areas. Though recent data regarding rural poverty rates in Canada is unavailable, a 2013 discussion paper on the topic from the Government of Canada noted that the country's rural residents earned less and had lower levels of education than residents in urban areas, suggesting that poverty is likely more prevalent in the Canadian countryside than in the country's cities.

What can be done Though food security poses a significant global challenge, lack of access to healthy foods is preventable. Individuals in rural and urban communities can voice their support for efforts to strengthen the agricultural sector. A thriving agricultural sector can ensure fewer people go to bed hungry each night and bolster the economies of rural communities that are disproportionately affected by poverty.

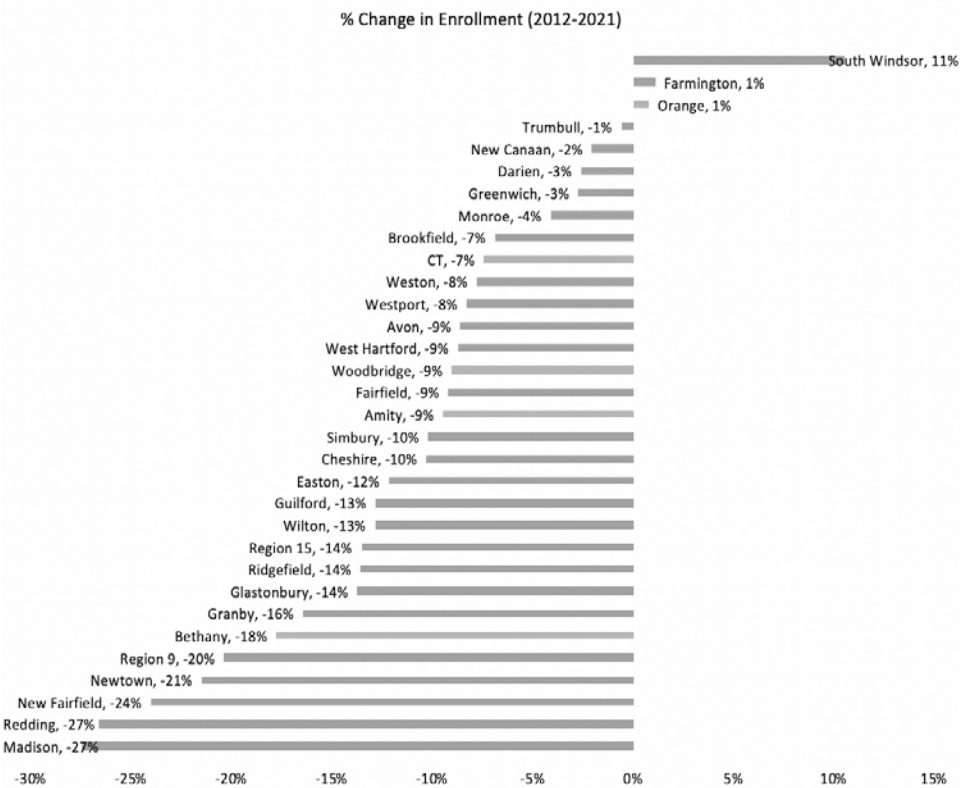
OPINION

Q&A on Amity Student Enrollment and School Switching

DR. K. SUDHIR, PH.D.
PROFESSOR, YALE SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT
MEMBER, AMITY BOE AND AFC

1. I hear Amity’s enrollment is going down. Is something wrong with the school?

Across Connecticut, enrollment in public schools has dropped due to falling population in the last decade. Amity’s enrollment dropped 9% from 2012-2021, and 3% from 2017-2021. Amity ranks in the middle of BOWA districts, and in the middle of districts both like us AND wealthier than us. Highly ranked schools across the state saw drops, many much bigger than Amity’s. The decline is not a reflection of educational quality at Amity.



Data Source: EdSight

2. What about parents pulling kids out of Amity? Is this different from the past or from peer schools?

I looked at the EdSight data on drop-off in students from 8th to 9th grade. During 2012-2021, Amity had an average drop of 3%. The 2021 decline was high at 7%, but we have had high declines in some years in the past decade. Other good school districts such as Fairfield, Ridgefield-Easton (Region 15) and Weston also had higher or comparable declines in 2021. Note: The state recently released 2022 data, and if any of the conclusions about enrollment and switching need an update, I will provide later.

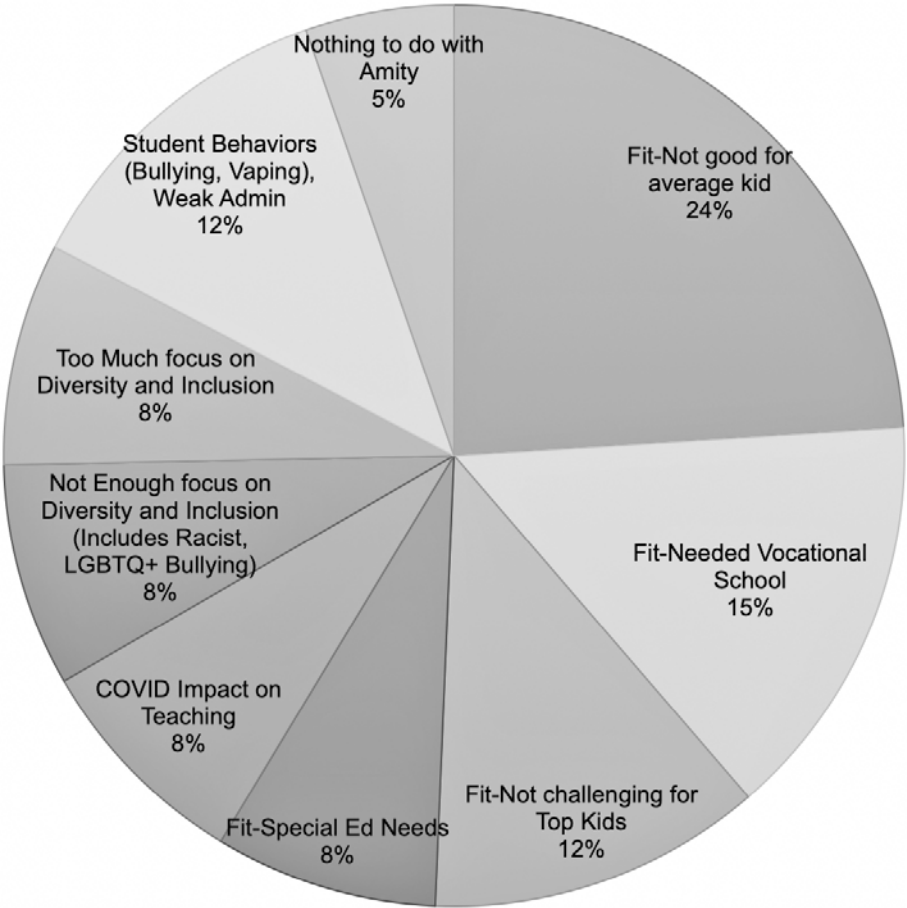
3. I read an op-ed that said kids are leaving Amity because the academics, administration and culture have gone bad. Is this true?

Ms. Meghan Rabuse surveyed people on Facebook hoping to learn reasons for why kids are leaving Amity. I thank her for sharing the raw data with me. This survey can’t tell us how Amity parents overall feel about the school district. Those who switch schools are only 2-3% of Amity families. And not every switching family took the survey. But these responses may still help us understand Amity.

From the text of the survey responses, I coded each respondent’s primary reason for switching schools. The graph below shows the share of various reasons.

A. 67% of switching was because of student fit or Covid disruptions

Fit with student needs drives 59% of the switching. Some kids need vocational school, some have specialized educational needs. Some want a curriculum focused on high-achieving students, while some others want an environment focused on the “students in the middle.” While Amity should strive to fit all students, it is not surprising that some parents prefer specialized schools that cater to their



Primary Reasons for Leaving Amity (N=75)

kids’ specific needs. Parents frustrated by poor fit for their child often blame the curriculum and administration.

COVID disruptions drove 8% of switching. This is an issue that has passed.

B. 16% had concerns with Amity’s diversity climate, but in opposite ways

Not Enough Attention to diversity and inclusion: 8% of parents felt Amity is not diverse and inclusive. These included parents concerned about racist, LGBTQ+ bullying.

Too much attention to diversity and inclusion: 8% of parents felt Amity focused too much on diversity and inclusion. These included parents concerned about their kids being bullied for conservative views.

Overall, 28 out of 75 respondents (37%) mentioned diversity-related issues, even if this was not their primary reason. Of these respondents, 57% cited too much attention to diversity, while 43% mentioned not enough attention to diversity. By calling opposite feelings around diversity as “toxic culture,” the op-ed presents a misleading picture of the school environment. The respondents on both sides blame the administration for the diversity climate. But I interpret the opposing sentiments to mean that the administration takes a balanced approach.

C. 12% left because of student behavior concerns - vaping, drug use, bullying

Some parents reported on their kids’ experiences, while many said they heard about problem behaviors and switched. Parents often also blame a “weak” administration for problem student behaviors.

All middle and high schools have some level of problem student behaviors. We all want the Amity administration to reduce/eliminate problem behaviors. But for a comparative perspective, it is useful to remember that the State classifies Amity as a Tier 1 district (best tier out of four) for discipline issues.

D. 5% of school switches were unrelated to Amity

These include moving out of district or a family always sending their kids to private school.

The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of Yale and BOE

“Imagine if we were all magical leprechauns, and every wish ever made on a four-leaf clover obliged us to help others obtain their wishes. Now imagine if people simply lived like this were true.” — RICHELLE E. GOODRICH

“ABOE” From Page 9

shared their pathways and experiences in their industry.

Hurricane Ian Photo Restoration Project: Throughout the first semester, the students in art teacher Lisa Toto’s photography classes have been the only high school classes involved in a nationwide effort to repair and restore family photographs damaged in last fall’s Hurricane Ian. Krista Kowalczyk, a Florida photographer and organizer of this project travelled from Florida to Woodbridge to meet our Amity students and held videoconferences with some of the people whose photos they restored. These meetings really drove home the importance of helping others to our students.

Yale’s McBeth Comes to Amity: Yale University School of Drama Professor and Amity parent Cynthia Santos-DeCure visited ARHS in January with some of her students who are currently in rehearsal for a student directed production of Shakespeare’s Macbeth. They spoke with junior English classes and the Advanced Acting Class, demonstrating their rehearsal process and discussing their experience bringing Shakespeare’s tragedy to life.

Success in Science at ARHS: Eight Amity Regional High School students took top spots in the CT-STEM Fair on February 4, 2023. By presenting their authentic research to STEM judges, the

following students were recognized for their work: Anchal Bahel, Andie Napolitano, Sabrina Osowiecki, Rebecca Chen, Jasir Zafar, Anushka Acharya, Henry Yang, and Daniel Matthew. On January 11, 2023, Amity’s newest members of the Science National Honor Society were inducted into the organization. Congratulations to all the new inductees!

Amity Student Art Show: The 7-12 art teachers are proud to present a collection of work being exhibited at the Clark Memorial Library in Bethany. The show will stay up through mid-March. There will be an opening reception from 4:00-5:30 pm on February 23, 2023. If unable to attend the opening reception, student work can be viewed during library hours.

Virtual Keynote Speaker: Parent Primer on Fentanyl, Edibles, and Vaping: The substance-use issues that our kids are navigating are much more complex than they used to be. To help parents stay informed and aware of current trends, Region 5 partnered with BOWDAAC and the Orange and Woodbridge Youth Service departments to host a parent webinar addressing these important topics on January 25, 2023. Panelists included Lorrie McFarland, Alliance for Prevention & Wellness and Tricia Dahl, Yale School of Medicine. For those who were unable to attend, the webinar recording is available on the ARHS Counseling Department website.



What Do Pets See In Color?

The popular notion that pets see in black and white, notably dogs, is false. People once thought that their furry companions couldn't see the color spectrum. However, the American Kennel Club reports that new research and conclusions about canine anatomy point to dogs having color vision, after all — it's just a bit more muted than their human friends. According to Dr. Jerry Klein, AKC's chief veterinary officer, dogs have more rods than cones in their eyes, which improves low-light vision. Cones are responsible for controlling color perception. Due to these anatomical differences, it is believed dogs's vision mimics that of a person with red/green color blindness. Color is perceptible for dogs, but not in the spectrum enjoyed by humans with healthy vision. Cats also can see in color, but similarly not with the same level of

detail as people. Furthermore, their vision is much more attuned to up-close sight than to focusing on objects that are far away. According to Birdfact, an online resource about birds, birds have arguably the best eyesight and ability to detect color of any member of the animal kingdom. Birds can see more color than humans because they have a fourth type of light-receiving cone in their retinas (humans have three). Therefore, a pet bird will be in tune with vibrantly colored items in and around his environment. Arizona State University's Ask a Biologist offers an interesting chart that illustrates colors certain animals can see at <https://askabiologist.asu.edu/colors-animals-see>. People who want to know if their pet rabbit can see color, or what those fish in their home aquariums can see, can consult the chart.

“Opportunity” From Page 1

the city also accepts some 2,650 suburban students into its public schools, ten of whom live in Woodbridge.

She said the lottery for the Open Choice program is administered by ACES (Area Cooperative Educational Services), and the city has no bearing on who gets in. Besides which, admission for kindergarten in many cases would be prior to them being identified for special services, she said.

“It is appalling to me that Woodbridge would withdraw participation in a program that is rooted in Brown v Board of Education,” she said, referring to the 1954 US Supreme Court decision that racial segregation of children in public schools was unconstitutional. “We believe in equitable access for all students, regardless of their race, educational designation or zip code.”

As is customary, the local board did not engage in a conversation with those addressing an issue during public comment. Even so, School Supt. Vonda Tencza did touch on the subject in her report, saying that this was a funding issue that did not reflect on the district’s commitment to the open choice mission.

“An ideal resolution would be for the State Department of Education to provide clarification and guidance of how this law should be followed, so that districts...are not debating financing and competing for funds,” she said. She said she participated in a meeting on February 14 with representatives from the State Department of Education, and its chief of the Bureau of Special Education agreed to serve as an intermediary to help identify a resolution.

The issue comes at a delicate time for the town, as it faces a lawsuit by The Open Communities Trust, and a group of housing advocates who charge that the town’s zoning regulations violate not only the state’s Fair Housing Act, but also the anti-segregation clause of the State Constitution. The case was recently ordered transferred from New Haven Superior Court to the Hartford Judicial District.

Sheila McCreven, currently a member of the Board of Selectmen who has previously served on both the Amity and the Woodbridge Boards of Education, also wrote a letter to the board to request that it reconsider its decision about the two Kindergarten slots.

“It is my belief that the Town of Woodbridge’s long history of continuous participation in this program

represents an important contribution to efforts to reduce racial, ethnic, and economic isolation in our public schools,” she wrote. “It also makes possible (for the participating students) the subsequent 6 years of education at the middle and high schools of the Amity Regional School District. I believe strongly that this participation benefits not just the Project Open Choice students and their families, but significantly enriches the education of all students in both the Woodbridge and Amity system. I would like to see participation continue uninterrupted.”

Woodbridge Board of Education members by and large expressed their support for the program. “I would like us to keep the door open,” said Erin Williamson, the only dissenting vote against reducing slots. “It’s not that we are opposed to the program, opposed to the concept – it’s that they are not meeting their obligations that they agreed to under this program.”



Brooke Hopkins had a different view. The program’s goal was to increase diversity, she said, “but our community is diverse now.” By sending mostly special Education students, it does not teach Woodbridge children about diversity. The only message we send is that kids from New Haven are special ed kids.”

DEI Committee: Not related to the discussion about Open Choice, School Principal Analisa Sherman presented the board later in the meeting with information about the work of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee. About 65.3% of students are white, she said, 15% are Asian and 7.8 Hispanic/Latino. 93% of the educators are white. From an economic perspective, 12.4 qualify for reduced price lunches. Thirty-six students identify as multi-language learners, with 15 languages represented in the larger school community, ranging from Arabic to Urdu.

Sherman gave the board a brief overview in how DEI has inspired multiple initiatives in the school, including those to inspire teachers through professional development, attempts at diversifying staff. She talked about embedding diversity into their daily conversation; teaching music and art and providing books in the classrooms as well as the library that provide a new perspective.

Asked how the school teaches children how to navigate differences in perspective, Sherman said, “we teach having disagreements and talking through them all the time. It’s happening organically throughout the day.”

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Maplewood Senior Living Receives 2023 Best of Senior Living Award For 14 Communities

The nation’s premier senior living provider also received the 2023 Best of Senior Living Customer Engagement Award and The Esteemed Organization Award

Maplewood Senior Living — one of the country’s leading senior living providers — is thrilled to announce that 14 of its communities across the US have just received the 2023 Best of Senior Living Awards, many for the sixth year in a row. The award was given by A Place for Mom, the premier online ratings and reviews site for senior care providers in North America.

Virtually all of the Maplewood properties in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Ohio were recognized as the top 2-3% of all senior living communities nationwide. A Place for Mom also awarded Maplewood the 2023 Best of Senior Living Customer Engagement Award and the Esteemed Organization Award.

“Since opening our very first community, we have been on a mission to redefine expectations for the later years in life by offering senior living communities that provide the very best hospitality, care and lifestyle,” said Gregory D. Smith, president and CEO of Maplewood Senior

Living and Inspir. “Receiving positive reviews from our residents and their families is the greatest form of compliment and offers validation that we are fulfilling our mission. We are honored to have 14 of our communities recognized with Best of Senior Living Awards and look forward to continuing to help fulfill each resident’s personal vision of the good life.”

The 2023 Best of Senior Living Awards mark Maplewood’s sixth consecutive year of inclusion in the annual ranking for all three Ohio communities: Maplewood at Chardon, Maplewood at Cuyahoga and Maplewood at Twinsburg. Six communities in Connecticut – Maplewood at Danbury, Maplewood at Newtown, Maplewood at Southport, Maplewood at Stony Hill, Maplewood at Strawberry Hill, Maplewood at Darien, as well as all of the Massachusetts communities – Maplewood at Mayflower Place, Maplewood at Weston, Maplewood at Mill Hill, and Maplewood at Brewster, and Maplewood at Princeton in New Jersey – are among the awarded communities.

A Place for Mom is in its tenth year of hosting the Best of Senior Living Awards. The Best of 2023 Award winners repre-

sent the highest caliber of senior living providers, based on the online reviews written by seniors and their families across the United States and Canada. To qualify for inclusion in the Best of 2023 Awards, care providers must have maintained an average overall rating of at least 4.5 stars while receiving at least 10

new reviews on A Place for Mom during the award period, as well as offer assisted living, in-home care, independent living, skilled nursing or memory care. In order to qualify for the Customer Engagement Award, the organization must have five or more communities win the Best of Senior Living award.

Apartments For Rent

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Thank you! We’re accepting names for our waiting list. Applicants must be 62 or older or disabled. One Bdrm-\$1,236/mo; Two Bdrm-\$1,308/mo incl utilities. On-site laundry, patios with garden area, off-street parking, handicapped accessible. CHFA Financed. EHO. Gibson Assoc., Inc. 175 East Mitchell Ave, Cheshire, CT 06410. Ph: 203-272-3781. TDD 1-800-545-1833 Ext 165

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HOUSES OF WORSHIP EVENTS

Congregation Beth El – Keser Israel Events

Children’s Programs

Children’s Havura, K-2 Kehila, and Junior Congregation, all led by parent volunteers, meet in person each Saturday morning. For more information, consult Education Director Annie Norman-Schiff at anormanschiff@beki.org.

BINA, which is BEKI’s religious school, has hired Rachel Beaver as music education director. A Masters of Arts in Religion student at Yale Divinity School and a gifted guitarist and singer, Beaver leads songs during Wednesday and Sunday school sessions—for classroom learning, special holiday events, and congregational tefillah (prayer).



Rachel Beaver

At Our Southern Border

Liora Cohen-Fraade will speak about “Immigration at Our Southern Border: a Lawyer’s View on Recent Barriers to Asylum” via Zoom on Wednesday, March 22. Currently a Justice Fellow at the Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES) in San Antonio, Texas, Attorney Cohen-Fraade represents clients in immigration proceedings. To request the Zoom link, email office@beki.org.



Liora Cohen-Fraade

Classes with the Rabbi

Current learning opportunities with Rabbi Eric Woodward include a discussion of the weekly Torah portion on Thursday mornings; study of the Philosophy and History of Conservative Judaism via Zoom on Thursdays at 7 pm; and Talmud study (Chapter 2 of Tractate Shabbat) on select Sunday mornings. Details at beki.org.



Preparing for Passover

On Saturday, March 25, Rabbi Woodward will lead a class about the Theology of Passover. On Saturday, April 1, his class will focus on Hilchot Pesach, the Laws of Passover; Rabbi Woodward will address practical questions as well as the core halakhic texts around the food observances.



Rabbi Woodward

The BEKI Giftshop, which sells cookbooks, Seder plates, matzah covers, haggadot, children’s Passover toys and books, is open by appointment every day except Saturday. Email giftshop@beki.org.

For the schedule of Passover holiday services, consult beki.org

In Person and Online

BEKI offers in-person services twice daily, led by Rabbi Woodward and congregants. Weekday services also are on Zoom. Details at beki.org

Retrospective Exhibit

A retrospective exhibition by Cynthia Beth Rubin, entitled Sensing Connection, is currently on display at BEKI. In works spanning decades of explorations, Rubin depicts imagined sensations of the unseeable yet essential aspects of our world. In collaboration with the Menden-Deuer Oceanography lab at the University of Rhode Island, recent work explores bringing empathy, awareness, and curiosity to the unseen or rarely seen microscopic life of the ocean. Details at <https://www.beki.org/our-community/gallery-art/cynthia-beth-rubin/>



Cynthia Beth Rubin

Located at 85 Harrison Street (corner of Whalley Avenue – Route 63 – in Westville)



The First Church of Christ, Woodbridge

The First Church of Christ welcomes you to our Worship Service every Sunday morning at 10:00 a.m. in the Meetinghouse. Kid’s Church every Sunday morning at 10:10.

Interim Minister

The Rev. Susan Murtha is the Interim Minister at FCCW and has made quite an impact. Plan a visit to see what is “happening.” You can also read about her on our website. We are honored to have such an extraordinary individual here with us at First Church!

Kid’s Church Has Begun Again at First Church!

Families meet at the church at 10:00 and at 10:10 the children are walked over to the Parish House for Kid’s Church by Forest Vandeflor, our project leader for children’s ministries, along with an adult volunteer. This is a great time for the children while their parents are at the worship service!

Weekly Bible Study

Bible Study meets at the Parish House each Wednesday, 10:30 am. All are invited!

Boy Scout Troop 907

Boy Scout Troop 907 began the new year with its Winter Court of Honor. One purpose of this ceremony is to present the Scouts with their advancement ranks, badges, and awards. Another reason is to celebrate the half year point of the scout year with a positive start and to show the new group of Scouts the progression of advancement to get them excited for moving further through the ranks and merit badges. At the Court of Honor on Thursday, January 19 Stephen Pedenski was awarded Life Scout and Griffin Welander First Class. The troop also welcomed four scouts to the Scout Rank and awarded

numerous merit badges. A photo of the scouts and adult leaders at the Court of Honor is shown.

Additionally, on January 8, scout and adult members of the troop supported Orange Troop 925 at its Eagle Court of Honor held at the Holy Infant Church. Eagle is the highest rank that can be obtained by a scout and 6 boys were honored at the Holy Infant Church ceremony with local and state dignitaries in attendance. Congratulations to Amir Jarad and Jack Belfonti who completed their road to Eagle with Troop 907. This partnership provided an opportunity for Troop 907 to work with Jack and Amir on their respective Eagle Projects. Currently only 6.5% of all Scouts obtain the rank of Eagle, so it is a great privilege to achieve this level. Congratulations again to all six new Eagle Scouts! A photo of Troop 925 Eagles and Scouts is also shown with the Troop 925 flag.

On January 25, 2023, cub scouts of Pack 902 came to visit the troop. They participated in activity with some of Troop 907 younger patrol, while other scouts continued to work on the First Aid Merit Badge with Assistant Scoutmaster Ken Hulse. We ended the meeting with a walk up to the track at Amity High School where we ran a mile.

The Troop has also started work on merit badges including Citizenship in the Community and Citizenship in Society. These badges emphasize the importance of being a contributing member of our towns and organizations. Both are required as part of the road to Eagle Scout. The leaders and scouts are looking forward to their winter camp outs and other activities including visits from local Cub Scout Packs.

On Thursday, February 16, 2023,

See “First Church” On Page 19

HOUSES OF WORSHIP

Monthly Young Families Program at Temple Beth Sholom

Temple Beth Sholom in Hamden offers ongoing programs for families with young children to start a lifelong relationship with Judaism. Current members and those seeking a connection to a Jewish community are invited to share and explore these Jewish experiences together.

Join us once a month from 9:45-11:00am for a craft, stories, and Yoga Yeladim with Sherri Sosensky, Kidding Around Yoga - Certified & Licensed KAY Instructor. Every month has a different theme! See upcoming dates

- and themes below:
- › Sunday, March 19, 2023 (Passover)
 - › Sunday, April 23, 2023 (Israel)
 - › Sunday May 7, 2023 (Tikkun Olam/Repairing the World)

This program is free and open to non-members. Please pre-register at: <https://tinyurl.com/TB-SYoungFamilies>

Temple Beth Sholom is an egalitarian conservative synagogue with over 350 member families and singles from the Greater New Haven community.

“First Church” From Page 18

the troop went skiing at Mount Southington. This was a great opportunity for some who have never skied before to those who are experts! It was a great night and might be the only snow we see in Connecticut all season.

Troop 907 is a robust, active, outdoors oriented troop chartered by the First Church of Christ in Woodbridge. The Troop meets Thursday evenings at 7:00 PM and is always interested in welcoming interested scouts and families to check them out. More at troop907.org.

Upcoming events

Sunday, March 12 Sources for Drawing Living Water – 11:15 am – 1:00 pm – At the Parish House

Rev. Dr. Greg Mobley and Rev. Susan Murtha will be leading this Lenten Event. They will be opening the Scriptures and having a soup and bread luncheon. All are welcome!

Saturday, March 25 Hop Into Spring – BUNNY BASH! – 10:30 AM – NOON – At the Parish House

Join us for this event for the whole family! We will have live family music with Michele Urban, awesome games, a scavenger hunt, and fantastic crafts.

Zoom Option

The option to attend Sunday Service via Zoom continues to be available. To receive an invite, please email the office or log on to our website and add your name to our church email list. All

people in the community are welcome in person or via Zoom.

**If you would like assistance gaining access to Sunday Services, please call us by Friday morning, at 203-389-2119, or email us at office@uccw.org.*

Office Hours

The Church office in the Parish House is open from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Join the FCCW Choir!

New members are always welcome. Join us for rehearsals each Tuesday at 6:30 p.m.

Pre-school space is available

Pre-school/day care space is available in the Parish House at 5 Meetinghouse Lane. Three rooms, 1,200 sq. ft., and an outside fenced playground.

For More Information

Visit our website at www.uccw.org for resources such as our calendar of events, monthly newsletter, ministry and volunteer opportunities, photo galleries, scout info, and much more! Follow us on Facebook and stay up to date with parish happenings, including memorials and baptism announcements. Feel free to email us or call the office with all your questions. We are happy to hear from you!

First Church of Christ, 5 Meetinghouse Lane, Woodbridge, CT 06525, 203-389-2119, office@uccw.org, www.uccw.org, www.facebook.com/uccwoodbridge



First Selectman Beth Heller and town staff members gather to raise awareness and funds for the annual Wear Red Day event at Town Hall. American Heart Health Month helps to bring awareness to women’s heart health and health equity. According to the American Heart Association, nearly 80% of cardiovascular disease can be prevented by healthy living steps.


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