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1765 Paxton Community News

PaxtonCommunityNews.com

May 15, 2024

Homes For Our Troops Building an Adapted Home in Holden for Marine Sergeant Craig Bailey and His Family

by Gordon Keegan

On January 7, 2010, during his third combat deployment in Afghanistan, Sgt. Craig Brady was conducting a battle damage assessment with the 2nd Combat Engineering Battalion when he stepped on an improvised explosive device (IED). The blast caused him to lose his right leg below the knee, resulted in severe back injuries, and damaged his left forearm.

Returning home, he underwent a number of lengthy surgeries at Bethesda Naval Hospital, with his wife Catie by his side. Today, Sgt. Brady, Catie, and their two sons Bruce and Luke live in Holden where, in a few months, they'll be moving into a new, specially adapted custom home, courtesy of Homes For Our Troops, a non-profit organization founded in 2004, and headquartered in Taunton, MA. Its mission is to build and donate specially adapted custom homes for severely injured post 9/11 veterans, this enabling them to rebuild their lives.

Homes for our Troops is a national organization that has thus far built homes for disabled veterans in some 45 states, with close to 400 homes being built, and more in the planning stage. Most of these Veterans have sustained injuries including multiple limb amputations, partial or full paralysis, and/or severe traumatic brain injury (TBI).

Approximately 90% of the funds donated to HFOT, go directly to support the building projects. Homes For Our Troops receives the highest possible rating of 4 stars from Charity Navigator and has an A rating with Charity Watch. Additionally, HFOT is a platinum-level Guidestar participant, demonstrating its commitment to transparency, and meets all 20 criteria

CONTINUED PAGE 3



Sgt. Brady, wife Catie, and their two sons, Bruce and Luke.

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First Congregational Church of Paxton Annual Yard Sale

1 Church St. will be holding its annual yard sale on Saturday, May 18 from 9 AM to 2 PM in coordination with the Paxton Lions Club's townwide yard sale. The church yard sale features hundreds of items available in the lower level of the church and on the front lawn. In addition, hotdogs, hamburgers, chili and chowder, as well as home-baked goods will be available for sale.

FOCOA NEWS FOR MAY 2024

Seniors are invited to join the Paxton Friends of the Council on Aging for a complimentary luncheon at Hartman's Herb Farm, 1026 Old Dana Road, Barre, MA on Sunday, June 2, 2024 at 1:00 p.m.

Please call the Senior Center at 508-756-2833 to register or refer to the COA May Newsletter for information on registering for this special Sunday luncheon sponsored by the FOCO. If you do not receive the May edition of the Paxton Senior Connection with registration instructions for the luncheon, contact the Senior Center. Carpooling will be available if needed.

The FOCO Annual Meeting was held on April 9th and election of officers was held.

- President: Dave Wheeler
- Vice President: Bill Cutroni
- Treasurer: Dave Wheeler
- Secretary: Kay Kingsbury
- Members at Large: Dick Bedard, Ann Bergin, Ann Marie Cole

NEW PAXTON COA ART GALLERY EXHIBIT

The Art Gallery in the Paxton Senior Center is planning to exhibit a display of photographs contributed by residents of Paxton and its neighboring towns.

Anyone who wishes to be part of the exhibit is welcome to contact the COA office at (508) 756-2833 with their name and information. The exhibit will be displayed from mid June to the end of August.

The Town of Paxton Memorial Day Ceremony

Join us for the annual Memorial Day Parade & Ceremony on Monday, May 27, 2024, at 10:00 on the Town Common (rain location will be at the Paxton Center School.) Starting at 8:30 AM join the Paxton Boy Scouts Pack 105 for breakfast at the 1st Congregational Church. Beginning at 10 AM, the parade will start at the Public Safety Building to the Town Common, with the ceremony to follow.

After the ceremony, please join the Paxton American Legion Post 306 in paying respect (gun salute) at each of the three cemeteries in town:

1. Old Cemetery behind Congregational Church
2. Mooreland Cemetery at WWII Memorial
3. Worcester County Memorial Park (WCMP)

Paxton American Legion Post 306 invites everyone to the Legion Hall for a luncheon following the last gun salute at WCMP.

All veterans in town and their families are invited to a luncheon at the First Congregational Church at noon, post parade and observances



TOWN OF PAXTON RECREATION ANNUAL SUMMER PROGRAM 2024

Pre-K (age 4) through 6th Grade Camp plus 7th and 8th grade Jr C.I.T program:

Located at Paxton Center School 19 West Street, Paxton

Come enjoy the summer with your friends and counselors. Your day will include scheduled fun activities, including sports (whiffleball, basketball, soccer, and volleyball), nature walks, water fun, arts & crafts, playground, fishing, swimming, field trips (extra fee) and much more. Rainy day activities planned.

Starting June 18th to August 9th 8 weeks of fun! Additional fee for field trips.

- There is a \$50 per week, per child deposit upon time of registration. This deposit will be applied to the balance on each week's fee.
- Payments may be made online or by cash/check payable to the town of Paxton.
- All balances will need to be paid in full by June 1st. After June 1st there will be an additional \$15 added to each week, and each child's fee.
- All balances are due at least one week in advance.
- There are no refunds or credits for cancellations or changes after June 1st.
- Early drop off from 8:00 to 9:00 is \$10.00 each day per family or \$40 per week per family.
- Half Days run 9:00 to 1:30 and Full Days run 9:00 to 4:00.

For registration forms or more info, go to:
<https://www.townofpaxton.net/recreation>

DCR Free Program: Watershed Wednesdays Speaker Series

CLIMATE RESILIENCY

MAY 15, 6:30-7:30 pm

Hear how changes in climate affect the way storms and hazards impact natural, cultural, and recreational resources from DCR's Director of Climate Resilience.

The full schedule can be found online at <https://www.mass.gov/doc/wachusett-watershed-wednesday-events-2024/download>

Document Shredding at Wachusett Recycling Center

Document shredding May 18th from 9am-12pm at the Wachusett Recycling Center. This is open to residents of Boylston, Holden, Paxton, Princeton, Rutland, Sterling and West Boylston only.

Please bring ONLY confidential documents to be shred so we don't run out of space in the truck. Please recycle non-confidential materials (envelopes, folders, inserts) in your regular curbside recycling or in our Mixed Paper Recycling container in Center Circle on any day that we are open. We'll be holding 3 events in 2024: May 18, 2024, August 17, 2024, October 19, 2024.

The first 2 boxes are free and fees are \$2 for each box after that.

CALLING ALL LOCAL MUSICIANS!!!

The 38th Paxton Summer Jam, Paxton's annual celebration of live local music, will take place Saturday June 15, 2024, from noon to 8 PM at the Paxton Bandstand at the Paxton Center Fields. The show features amateur musicians of all ages and skill levels. For information on how you can participate please contact Doug Moore 508 340 5012. dougmoorewsma@gmail.com Please help us spread the word. The event is sponsored by Paxton Cultural Council and Paxton Recreation.

Letters to the Editor

Letters should be no more than 300 words, and must include the writer's name, address, phone number and signature. Only name, street name and town will be printed. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. On occasion, letters up to 500 words may be published as opinion pieces, at the editor's discretion. Send email to sterlingmeetinghousenews@gmail.com or mail to: Sterling Meetinghouse News, 35 Redemption Rock Trail, Sterling, MA 01564.



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The next issue will publish June 19, 2024. Copy deadline is the first of each month. Items received after deadline will be included if space is available.

Publishers • Mark & Karen Packard
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 Contributors • Gordon Keegan, Matt LaBarre, Jamie Lasorsa

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Paxton Lions Club



Sunday, June th, at 1.00pm



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Team of two: \$50



To register: Venmo payment @Paxton-LionsClub
with Team Name, Players Names and Contact Email

or email Sheryl Chapman at schap120@gmail.com

All proceeds go to the Paxton Lions Charity Fund.



A recently built "Homes For Our Troops" home.

Photo Contributed

of the Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance.

Rebuilding lives is the most important aspect of HFOT mission. They stay in contact with the veterans after home delivery. Homes For Our Troops provides a pro-bono financial planner for three years to assist in financial planning and household budgeting. They also provide homeownership education and warranty coverage to ensure that the veteran is set up for long-term success as a homeowner. One staff section's sole focus is following up with the veterans, and they also have a peer mentoring program consisting of veterans and spouses in the HFOT program. To improve their post home delivery support, they continue to expand their network of nonprofits, corporations, and government entities to provide assistance with employment, education, training, health, and other issues. They strive to provide the linkage between the veteran and the assistance

he or she needs. Other differences include building where the veteran wants to live, and a comprehensive selection process.

Currently HFOT has more than 100 severely injured veterans in the application process. As a top-rated military and veterans' nonprofit organization, Homes For Our Troops relies on the generosity of donors. Homes For Our Troops is a publicly funded nonprofit, with approximately 65 percent of their operational budget generated by individual donors, private and family foundations, and community fundraisers nationwide who step up to help veterans by coordinating everything from lemonade stands to golf tournaments. The remaining 35 percent comes from corporate supporters in the form of cash and donated materials.

Additional information about the organization may be found at hfotusa.org.



Cornhole Tournament

The Paxton Lions are sponsoring a Town Wide Yardsale on Saturday, May 18. Come out and find some great deals. Maps will be available at the town Common. 100% of monies raised by the Lions Club goes to charity.

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Dive In! Aquaspot Makes A Splash with Open Swimming or Lessons

by Matt LaBarre

Are you searching for an indoor pool and/or a place to bring your children to learn how to swim?

Aquaspot, located within the Soccer Asylum, 603 Pleasant Street, in Paxton, may be your answer.

Formerly the Paxton Tennis and Fitness Club, the facility has recently changed hands, with the Bolivar family contracting with the owners of the Soccer Asylum to manage all the pool and swim related functions.

“We’ll be open for defined times for open swim during the week,” Ms. Danny Bolivar states, “with lifeguards provided at all times.” The British Swim School will continue to provide classes for children, and those classes remain very popular. “The classes run by the British Swim School, as well as all of our classes, are focused on water survival.” She continues, noting that survival skills, exercise, and fun can go hand in hand.”

The pool is a salt water indoor pool. Since Aquaspot began managing the pool, new filters have been installed, new equipment purchased, and the deck has been re-painted.

“Now that the Soccer Asylum is bringing so many children to the facility, we want

to guarantee everyone’s safety, which is why we have begun have a lifeguard on duty at all times, which was not the case prior to Soccer Asylum purchasing the facility.” Bolivar continues.

“We also have programs and classes for seniors many mornings, and classes for individuals with special needs.” She says. “Aquaspot will also be running lifeguard certification classes, which is particularly important not just because we need lifeguards here, but because there is a state-wide and nation-wide lifeguard shortage.”

Aquaspot promises to provide a clean, safe, and fun environment for anyone who enjoys swimming without having to think about the weather (or winter cold) as well as a venue to bring children to learn to swim, either by bringing them with you to open swim, or by registering the child for a class at the British Swim School. Membership information may be obtained through the website or at the facility. Day passes will also be available.

“We are still in the process of developing a website,” Bolivar explains, although we do invite anyone to visit: www.aquaspotma.com, check us out on our Facebook page, or simply drop in and take a look.” Bolivar concludes.



Left Photo: A picture of the Aquaspot facility.
Top Photo: Aquaspot attendees exercising while a lifeguard is on duty.
Photo Contributed



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Garden Guru: Spring Planting

By Mark Packard



It looks like the weather is finally nice enough to start your vegetable gardens and annual planting! Keep an eye on the night time temperatures just in case. If the temperatures get below 40 degrees, cover your tender plants with a blanket or sheet. Plastic will not work for frost protection because it is too thin and will transfer the cold to any plant that touches it.

Spring planting has begun! Now is a great time to get new trees, shrubs and perennials in the ground. If you haven't mulched yet, do it soon before weeds start to grow. Mulch is a great weed suppresser and keeps the moisture around your plants. It also breaks down and replaces nutrients in your soil. Another great weed preventer is a granular called PREEN. It is a germination preventer which means it won't hurt existing plants, it

will just prevent weed seed from germinating.

Now is also the best time to do transplanting, splitting and pruning. Plants will heal faster and divided plants expand faster during the spring growing season.

Mother's day is like black Friday for garden centers. Mother's day weekend is the busiest weekend of the entire season for a few reasons. Trees and flowers are a popular gift for mom and that's one reason, but it also marks the beginning of the growing season! We always have the best selection between Mother's Day and Memorial Day.

Gardening questions? Please call 978-407-2568.



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Tax Talks

with Jennifer Lovett, IRS Enrolled Agent (EA)

(Owner/operator of Liberty Tax Service in Holden, Clinton, Framingham, Marlborough, Worcester, Spencer and Athol)

I admit that May is my favorite month of the year. Sports are in full swing, everything is getting greener, the weather is getting warmer, and I myself do not have to hit the office seven days a week until next year. I love my career and

working with so many amazing clients, but tax season is long and well... taxing. As much as I would like to report that the golf course my new full-time office, I do not get to fully relax, there is still plenty of work to be done in the tax off-season.

There are many people who file extensions and have complicated tax returns that still need to be filed. Maybe there was missing paperwork or just needed more time to account for deductions or credits. As happens every year, you may be someone who missed the deadline and may have forgotten to file an extension? What should you do if you are in this bucket? My recommendation is not to wait, get your information organized and file before the rush in October which seems to get here quicker each year. Remember, if you have a balance due, that balance is accruing penalties and interest as you are reading this article so there is no time like the present to get tax year 2023 wrapped up and behind us.

I work with clients, even those who did not file with me, because a dreaded letter with an IRS or Massachusetts Department of Revenue seal showed up in your mailbox. Rip those letters open and grab a teammate who has been trained to provide the information that is being requested. Sometimes these letters are formalities, sometimes they are more involved. The best piece of advice I can offer is never ignore them and answer as soon as you possibly can. An enrolled agent with the IRS can assist you in any area you need, those range from verification letters to audits or even needing payment plans or offer in compromises.

The off-season is a great time to reach out to a tax professional for



tax planning. As I noted in a prior article, tax planning is not just looking ahead to next year but using proper planning to reduce tax liability through deductions, benefits and exemptions. Even if your last tax return was satisfactory for you, it does not mean you have planned effectively for the future. There are many ways to save for retirement beyond a simple 401K, take the time to be knowledgeable in retirement plan options and how it will affect the taxability of distributions down the road.

Don't let summer pass you by without putting in work on your financial plan. Create a strategy, review your portfolio, research retirement plans such as Roth IRA's and HSA's, get yourself organized and don't go it alone. Reach out and find trusted advisors who spend all year working on continuing education and reading long articles, all so you don't have to. For now I hope everyone gets to enjoy Spring just as much as your local tax preparers do.



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Why Pricing Your Home Correctly is Extremely Important

By Karen Packard

If you are thinking of selling your home one of the main factors when considering putting your house up for sale is how much can I sell for? The spring season is usually the best time of year to maximize your sale price. The good news for sellers is that we are still experiencing extremely low inventory which is making it very competitive for buyers to find the right house. Pricing your home correctly will get you the most money for your home.

While it is true that we are having another strong spring market and buyers need to compete in many cases to secure the home they want, it is also true that buyers are becoming extremely savvy and know what they are willing to pay for a property. If you overprice your home from the start, it could actually cost you in the long run.

The asking price for your house is the first thing they look at. This sends a message to potential buyers. They do a drive by or scan the internet photos for their first impression. They will compare that to the listing price and what they feel that first impression is worth. If you can impress them with professional photos and good curb appeal during the drive by you can often get them to make the next move... calling their real estate agent for a showing appointment. But, if the price does not reflect what they feel the house is worth from the photos, buyers will move on to other properties and possibly never set foot in your house even if you reduce the price in a couple weeks.

According to an article in U.S. News Real Estate: "Even in a hot market where there are more buyers than houses available for sale, buyers aren't going to pay attention to a home with an inflated asking price."

Buyers are not willing to pay more than they have to for a property and with the low inventory, buyers usually are looking at many properties. They are comparing available properties to each other for value. With the increase in interest rates and home prices staying high, buyers are very budget conscious and know what they want and what they are willing to pay. If they think your house is overpriced, they may write it off without even stepping foot in the front door, or simply won't make an offer if they think it's priced too high.

When that happens, it's going to take longer to sell. In this market, you don't want to have to think about doing a price drop to try to re-ignite interest in

Sold Single Family Homes Sold in Paxton in May 2024

- 545 Pleasant St. Paxton, MA Sale Price \$450,000
- 3 Rollingridge Lane Paxton, MA Sale Price \$427,000
- 5 Dunanderry Way Paxton, MA Sale Price \$650,000

*Recent sales information is from the MLS, it does not include private sales.

your house. Buyers look at a home that has been sitting on the market for a couple weeks or one that needed to do a price reduction and wonder what is wrong with that property? In a market where everything is still selling quickly, a home that does not sell in the first few weeks usually makes buyers assume there is a problem with it and often will pass on looking at it. They will just move on and continue to look at new listings instead.

Pricing your home at or even just below the current market value is a great strategy to get buyers interested. The more buyers interested, the more showings you get. The more showings usually means more offers! Talk to your real estate agent about their pricing strategy and work with them to come up with the perfect listing price. A great agent will take into consideration the current market conditions, your location, the style of your home, the year it was built and the updates you have done as well as the square footage and overall feel of your property. We take all that information and compare it to recently sold properties in the area to set the perfect listing price.

There are other factors that impact the price both positively and negatively so discuss these with your real estate agent. But the bottom line is that the initial listing price is extremely important to get you the most money possible when you go to sell your house. Make sure you have the right agent and the right strategy to achieve your home sale goals.

As always, feel free to reach out to me with any questions at kpackardrealtor@gmail.com or 978-407-2568.

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Best Buddies Go to The Boston Marathon

By Jamie Lasorsa

Sterling resident Brendan Aylward is certainly making big strides in the evolution towards creating a more inclusive and accessible environment within the health and fitness arena. While a sophomore at Nashoba Regional High School, he found himself faced with a broken wrist and unable to play basketball. Brendan was encouraged by his mother to get involved in the Best Buddies program at the school. This is when he was first introduced to the world of adaptive athletics.

Best Buddies is a non-profit organization established in 1989 by Anthony Kennedy Shriver. The mission of Best Buddies is to establish a global volunteer movement that creates opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment, leadership development, inclusive living, and family support for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (quoted from the bestbuddies.org website). It's through this program that Brendan connected with a family that would dramatically impact his life and career path. He really enjoyed working with the kids in the program and found the friendships he formed rewarding.

Brendan felt drawn to the kids as he felt the connections were genuine and, in a world where everyone around you wants something, these kids just wanted his time and friendship, rather than the high expectations that others are usually seeking. Brendan faced some rough circumstances as a young adult, the passing of a couple close friends, and feels that his work with the Best Buddies program and Special Olympics kept him occupied and on a good path through those rough times. It soon became his passion, as well as a mission.

While attending university and majoring in Special Education, Brendan decided he wanted to integrate his special education background with fitness and create an environment which combined the two. He continued to work with the Best Buddies program, volunteering at NRHS and working with the younger brother of an athlete he first met back as a high school student. Jacob W. was just 9 years old when he and Brendan (19 at the time) started developing a friendship that would span well beyond the boundaries of the Best Buddies and Special Olympics programs. Jacob, who is both autistic and has Down syndrome, began spending the weekends with Brendan at his family's home so they could share more time together. About 10 years ago, the two took their friendship to the streets, running together as a hobby, as a "duo team". A Duo Team is comprised of a runner pushing a non-ambulatory person with a permanent physical impairment in a customized racing wheelchair. Their first 5K was the Angiosarcoma Awareness 5k in Oxford, MA in March of 2014. Special guests Dick and Rick Hoyt, father, and son duo team, were special guests and Brendan and Jacob caught their eye. They talked with Brendan about their endeavor for Team Hoyt New England and the rest, as they say, is



Brendan Aylward and Jacob W. racing in the 2022 Falmouth Road Race.

Photo Contributed

history! Team Hoyt New England's mission is to raise awareness of inclusion, educate, inspire, and enrich the lives of individuals, families and communities by pairing athletes of differing abilities in endurance events to promote the Team Hoyt motto, "Yes, You Can!" (quoted from [http:// www.teamhoyt-newengland.com](http://www.teamhoyt-newengland.com)).

Jacob continues to spend weekends with Brendan, now sharing his special light with Brendan's wife and 2 young boys. Brendan and Jacob have run roughly 90 races together, mostly New England based, but did travel to Atlanta, GA for a half marathon in March of 2020. However, the duo team has spent the last 4 years preparing and striving to achieve the ultimate goal, qualifying for the historic Boston Marathon. This year, they made that happen! In order to qualify for the Boston Marathon, Jacob needed to reach the age of 18, which he did in 2023 and the duo needed to reach a qualifying time based on Brendan's age, in this case 3 hours, which they did at the Martha's Vinyard Marathon last May. From there, it was full steam ahead to prepare for Boston.

Training for Boston was no different for Brendan than his normal routine. He and Jacob continued to run together on the weekends and Brendan continued his 50-60 miles of running each week to increase his time and strive to perform at his very best. Training mostly on bike paths, as it's a bit easier pushing the chair on a smoother surface, but did do a few training runs on the actual Boston course. When the big day arrived, they were ready. Being a part of the largest duo team field

CONTINUED PAGE 9

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Younger workers must balance financial priorities

Here's a sobering statistic: 72% of retirees say one of their biggest fears is becoming a burden on their families, according to a study by Edward Jones and the consulting firm Age Wave. If you are near retirement, how can you prepare yourself to become financially free, so you won't have to depend on grown children or other family members?

Here are a few suggestions to consider:

- Keep adding to retirement savings. Today, with a greater awareness of healthy lifestyles, many people are spending two, or even three, decades in an active retirement. To help pay for those years, then, you'll likely need to build your retirement savings as much as possible. So, while you're still working, try to contribute as much as you can afford to your 401(k) or other employer-sponsored retirement plan. If you are in the later stages of your career, possibly close to your peak earning power, you may be able to put in sizable sums every year.
- Choose an appropriate withdrawal rate. While it's obviously important to build your retirement savings, it's just as essential to make the money last. Once you retire, you'll want to establish an appropriate withdrawal rate — that is, the amount you can take out each year from your 401(k) and other investments without running the risk of outliving your money. The amount you can safely withdraw each year will depend on a variety of factors, including your age, your account balances, Social Security benefits, inflation, income tax rates and spousal income. In any case, selecting a suitable withdrawal rate can help go a long way toward preserving your financial freedom throughout your retirement.

- Think about downsizing. One possible way to boost your savings and add liquidity is to downsize your living arrangements. This may be an attractive option if your children are grown and your current home feels too large. Of course, downsizing is a highly personal decision — if you've lived in your home for many years, have fond memories of raising a family in it and still enjoy the neighborhood, it can certainly be hard to leave. Consequently, you'll need to weigh these emotional factors against the potential financial benefits of moving into a smaller, less expensive space.

- Prepare for long-term care costs. If you were ever to need some type of long-term care, such as an extended stay in a nursing home, you could face some sizable expenses, most of which may not be covered by Medicare or a Medicare Advantage plan. And clearly, you would not want to put your grown children in a position where they might feel the need to step in financially. To help avoid this possibility, you may want to consult with a financial professional about addressing these costs through strategies that may be appropriate for your needs.

These aren't the only ideas to consider in helping maintain your financial independence and reducing your potential dependence on your family during your retirement years. But taken together, they can give you a good start — so think about putting them to work.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor.

Edward Jones, Member SIPC

For more information please contact Christina Lashua at Christina.lashua@edwardjones.com

BEST BUDDIES from page 8

ever, and despite some knee issues, the duo was able to complete the race, achieving their “B” goal (under 3:10) with a finish time of 3:07:12, placing 4th in a division of 20 Duo Teams. I would encourage you to find and watch Brendan's video blogs that he has posted on his Instagram to get a full spectrum of the duo's race experience.

Brendan's ultimate goal is to raise awareness of inclusion in endurance sports. While so much more can be shared about this topic, their story, and their Boston Marathon experience, (I know that I personally have learned a boatload from just chatting with Brendan a few short times and reading the information on his websites) there is still so much work to be done in striving for full inclusion for all athletic abilities.

Brendan was just 23 years old when he opened his fitness facility, Unified Health and Performance in Lancaster (<https://unifiedhp.com>). Unified Health and Performance is a gym that operates as a “high-level strength and conditioning facility where athletes with and without disabilities [can] seamlessly coexist in a mutually beneficial environment.” Training is individualized group training, where everyone has a program and there are multiple coaches for each class, making sure everyone is getting the attention and support they need.

Brendan has also created an educational component, AdaptX, (www.adaptx.org) a non-profit educational company where his model of working with various disabilities and creating more accessible environments is taught

to fitness professionals all over the world. Also located within the building that houses these entities, is the Hoyt Research Lab. “The Rick Hoyt Research Lab was created to conduct projects that revolve around improving fitness and reducing secondary health conditions for individuals with intellectual and physical disabilities.”

While my time speaking with Brendan was short, I was truly impressed by not only all he has accomplished at such a young age, but also his passion, his drive, and overwhelming modesty. Although Brendan expressed that he understands that it's a heartwarming topic, to a degree, his ultimate goal of raising awareness for inclusivity, also includes normalizing accessibility within endurance sports, “the more I can try to make it seem like a human right, rather than an exception the better. AdaptX teaches trainers to address the diverse biomechanics and cognitive needs of any client.”

I would like to encourage everyone to check out Brendan's websites and his social media (www.instagram.com/adaptx.coach) and see some of the amazing work he is doing. I'd also like to encourage you to check out and consider registering for the 6th Annual Unified 5K taking place on Saturday June 1, 2024. The race will raise money for AdaptX and continue working towards education and inclusion for all athletes. This year there will also be an AdaptXpo after the race, with vendors, clinics (amputee soccer clinic and beep baseball clinic) and competitions.

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STEP 3

Once the design is complete and you're happy with the selections, the plants stay right where they are. You can request that our install crew return and plant them for you at an additional cost, or you can choose to install the plants yourself. And that's it!

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Paxton Library Events - May & June 2024

Ready, Set, Grow: Seed of the Month Club

May: Black Hollyhock

One packet per person, available when you check out an item; no holds or reserving; while supplies last. Sponsored by the Friends of Richards Memorial Library (FRML).

Special Storytime with Community Connections

May 22, Wednesday from 10am-11:30am

The Very Hungry Caterpillar Scavenger Hunt and Picnic

For young children and their caregivers. For more information, visit wachusettcfce.com. Registration Required by emailing communityconnections@wachusettcfce.com.

CLOSED

May 25, Saturday

The library is closed on Saturday when Monday is a holiday.

Friends of Richards Memorial Library Meeting

May 30, Thursday from 2-3pm

Anyone interested in joining us is encouraged to come to the library.

WEEKLY EVENTS

LEGO Challenge

Tuesdays - 3:30-4:30pm

Ages 5+ (due to small pieces). Join the building fun. Try a new challenge each week, or free build. We supply the LEGOs, you supply the imagination.

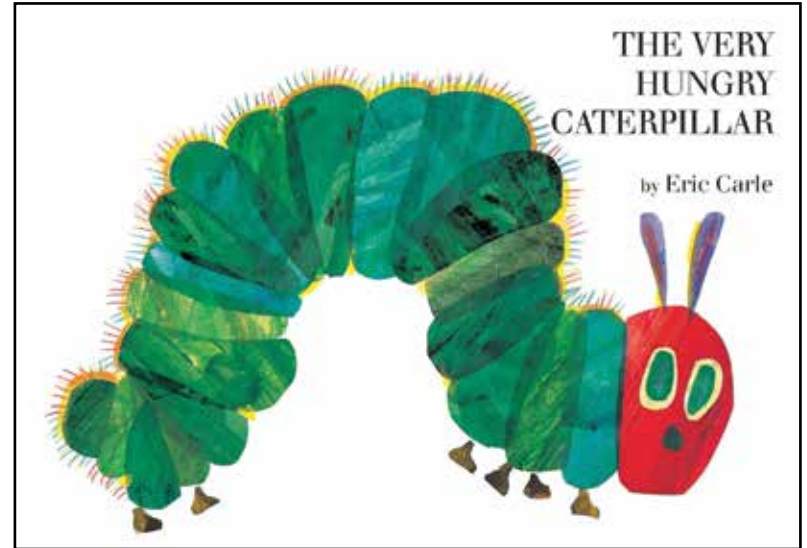
Drop-in, no registration required.

Outdoor Story & Play Time

Wednesdays - 10:30-11:15am

Join us for healthy outdoor play and learning in the library yard. We sing songs, go on scavenger hunts, tell stories, do art & experiments, and have fun.

(We may move inside during inclement weather - check website for updates.)



Storytime with Community Connections:

The Very Hungry Caterpillar Scavenger Hunt and Picnic.

May 22: Special 10am-11:30am

May 29: No Storytime. Next Storytime is on June 5.

Chess Time at the Library

Thursdays - 3:30-4:30pm

Play, learn, and teach chess together. Other board games available. All ages and skill levels welcome.

Youth Book Club

Graphic Novel Book Club (ages 8-12)

Receive a book and activity or treat each month. Optional in-person meeting the last Wednesday of each month, 4-4:40pm, for discussion & fun activities. May's book: The Happy Shop by Brittany Long Olsen. Register: Rmlpaxton.org/tweens

Looking Ahead.....Summer Reading

Summer Reading Program for Adults - Gift card prizes and a bonus prize: a Kindle PaperWhite. The Read, Renew, Repeat Summer Reading Program launches in June for children, tweens and teens. Get ready for great books, exciting programs, and fun prizes for reaching your reading goals.

Details will be announced in June.

Sponsored by the Friends of Richards Memorial Library.

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Paxton Senior Center Spring Art Show

Six Paxton residents: Charles Belisle, Anita Fenton, Ann McDougale, Carol Morin, Cheryl Rossier, and Robert Thorn will be exhibiting artwork composed of mixed media such as acrylic, watercolor and oil paintings, ink drawing, and textiles in the Senior Center Art Gallery. The show will be open from 10AM to 1PM and continues until the end of May. Come vote for the Best in Show art work.

The Family Letters of Abby Kelley Foster and Stephen Foster

Thursday, May 16 at 11am

The lives and voices of local abolitionists and human rights activists Abby Kelley and Stephen Foster come alive in this historic performance. Worcester professional actors Thomas and Lynne McKenney Lydick bring the essence of the famed couple, including their stance on the abolition of slavery in the 19th century, while inspiring others in the cause of liberty, justice, and equality for all.

This program is open to all ages. Learn about our country's history and the people who made a mark in it.

Sponsored by: Paxton Cultural Council, Paxton Historical Commission, and Council on Aging

Pen Pals Party

Our Pen Pal program wraps up for the year with a party at the Senior Center on Friday, June 7 at 10 am. It's an opportunity for letter writers to meet each other after sharing many interesting thoughts for several months. About 50 seniors have been connected to fourth-graders at Paxton Center School since last September.

Complimentary lunch

The Council on Aging is sponsoring complimentary lunches every Thursday during May. It's a great time to get out, socialize, and enjoy the food. Just call us by the Tuesday before to reserve (508-756-2833).

Sheriff's Senior Picnic

Saturday, June 8, 11 am—1 pm

SAC Park - 438 Lake Street, Shrewsbury

It's an annual treat for seniors! Worcester County Sheriff's Office invites all seniors to SAC Park for a free Drive-thru Extravaganza. BBQ Meal, Desserts, Tons of Giveaways and more fill the day. Attendees must register by May 20: nydia@worcestercountysheriff.org • (508-796-2638).

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dear josh:

What can I do to break up a long interior wall?



A long wall spanning across multiple spaces can be both a design challenge and an exciting opportunity to showcase your creativity. Consider it a canvas waiting to be transformed into a stylish focal point that ties your spaces together seamlessly!

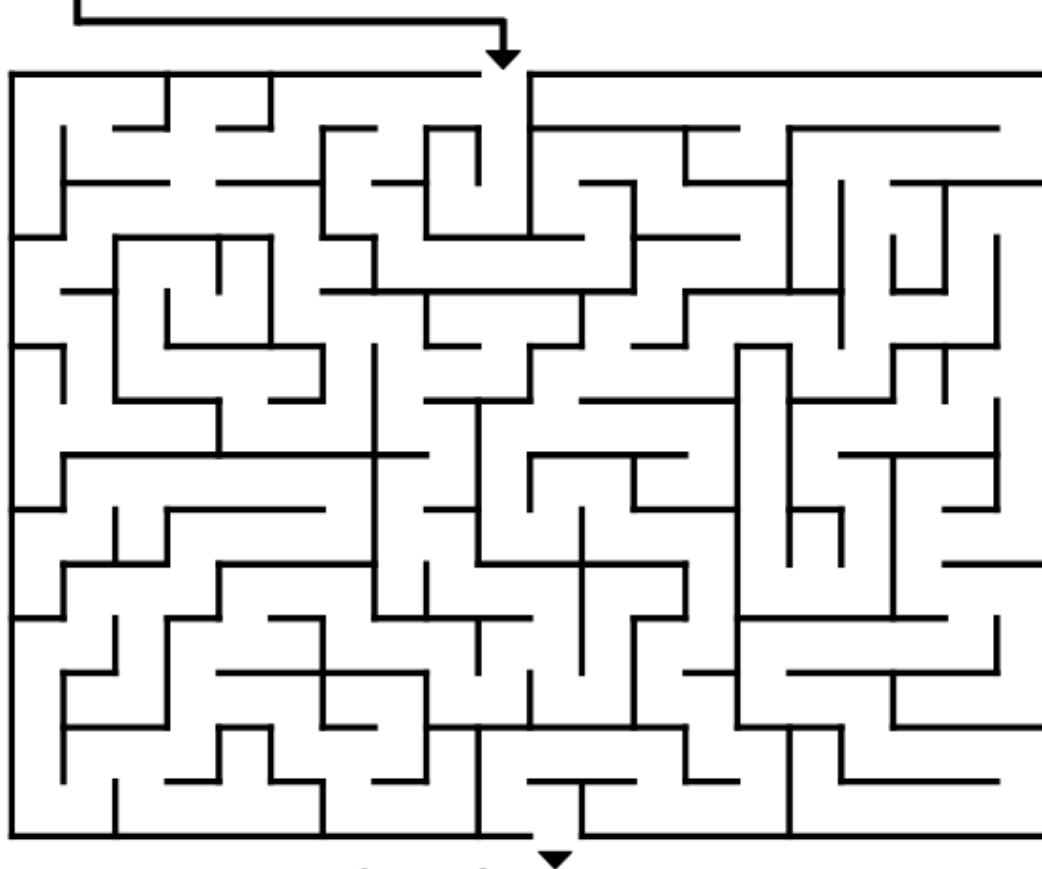
1. **Create functional zones.** Divide the long wall into functional zones corresponding to the different living spaces.
2. **Create an accent.** By using bold wallpaper, a contrasting paint color, or textured wall panels you can add visual interest and help define each area within the open floor plan.
3. **Bring in plants!** A combo of tall floor plants and hanging planters will create a layered and dynamic effect, breaking the wall up.
4. **Create a gallery wall,** with a mix of artwork, mirrors, and framed photographs. Mix and match styles and sizes for a personalized look.

Read the full article for even more tips at www.joshuaalendesign.com/blog

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Wachusett Student Places First in the National Ski Patrol Eastern Division Young Adult Patrollers Summit

by Gordon Keegan

April is a great time of the year in New England. The blustery winds and snows of the winter are gone. And in its place are the first stirrings of warm weather, as short sleeved shirts replace cardigans and bulky sweaters. Everyone has a big smile on their face, with one exception.

"It's okay, I guess," says Avery Laitala, Sterling resident, "but to be honest, I much prefer the snow." Huh? "Yeah," she adds, "that's really where the action is. I miss it!"

And miss it she should, because for the last 18 years, this senior at Wachusett High, has spent virtually all her free winter time skiing at Wachusett Mountain, Smuggler's Notch, and other New England ski areas.

But being a skier is one thing. Being a world-class skier and a member of the Young Adult Patrol for the National Ski Patrol is quite another. The National Ski Patrol itself, is a nonprofit and is the largest winter education organization in the world. The NSP provides education, outreach, and credentialing related to outdoor recreation and safety. It is currently composed of more than 31,000 members who serve in over 650 patrols.

Against this backdrop, Avery recently won a number of awards versus stiff competition, in the Young Adult Patrol Summit of the NSP Eastern Division. In fact, competing against 40 Young Patrol skiers from the Eastern Division, she took home first place in several categories including: Skiing, Assessment, and Outdoor Emergency Care. It was enough to propel her to 1st Place overall in the competition. Quite an amazing feat.

It took a lot of hard work and energy to get there, but Avery comes by it honestly. Skiing has always been more than just a hobby. Both of her parents, Jenn and John Laitala, are not only enthusiastic skiers, but paved the way for Avery as members of the National Ski Patrol themselves. Her older sister Reilly, is also an accomplished skier. Her grandparents ski as well. In fact, both Avery's sister and grandparents are members of the National Ski Patrol.

Avery recalls that it all began at a very early age. "I've been skiing since I can walk, but I don't really remember that part of my life. So, I would have to say going up every single Saturday, with my parents and older sister. We would always get really pumped listening to music. Then on the slopes



Avery Laitala, Sterling resident, is a world class skier.

Photo Contributed

making our turns going down and having nice conversations on the way back up the chairlift."

The family that skis together, has fun together! And that's certainly the case for the Laitalas, and it's been going on for decades.

And as for the future? Avery, in the process of finishing up her last year at Wachusett High, is planning on going to college to study biomedical engineering. She explained that biomedical engineering focuses on

advances in technology and medicine to develop new devices and equipment for improving human health. "It's something I've been interested in for a long time," she said, "and I'm looking at several universities that specialize in that area."

Wherever she ends up, Avery is pretty sure it will be located in close proximity to ski slopes. "I just couldn't imagine not skiing if there was snow on the ground," she beams. "It's such a huge part of my life."

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