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1765 Paxton Community News

PaxtonCommunityNews.com

March 19, 2025

From Heartbreak to Hope: Turning Tragedy Into a Force For Good



Remembering Tyler and his love for baseball.

Photo Contributed

By Matt LaBarre

Tyler Trudell, a seventh grade student in the Wachusett District at Paxton Center School, loved baseball, and was an active participant not just in Paxton youth baseball but in a number of Paxton youth sports programs. One morning in May of 2021, every parent's worst nightmare occurred, when Tyler simply never woke up. There was no warning, no apparent injury or incident that precipitated that dreadful morning.

Lynn Trudell and her family searched for a way to make something positive out of the overwhelming tragedy. "We started making bracelets to raise funds for a bench at Polar Park in Tyler's name, and the WooSox reached out to us with the idea to start a charitable organization in Tyler's name." Lynn Trudell explains. "With Tyler's Paxton Center School classmates as ambassadors, Tyler's Teammates was born."

With the Worcester Red Sox help, Tyler's Teammates raises funds to help families throughout Central Mass afford the costs associated with participating in youth baseball, including costs such as registration, equipment, travel fees, and other costs that could keep some youngsters from participating. Since the effort began on Valentine's Day three years ago, many young people in the area have been able to play baseball, the game Tyler loved so much, because of Tyler's Teammates.

"The Paxton community has gathered with Tyler's family at the annual town takeover days to remember Tyler." Trudell says. "I'm so grateful to the WooSox for all their support, as well as all our family and friends."

"Without their support, I don't know how we would have gotten through this." Trudell continues. Even as

CONTINUED PAGE 11

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Stargazing and Moon Phases Information

Did you know that over 80 percent of U.S. residents can't see the Milky Way because of light pollution? We're lucky that we can in Princeton, but that luck could run out soon unless we take action. While we might not take the time to appreciate the stars nightly, surely we will miss them if they are gone. By taking easy steps to mitigate light pollution, each of us can ensure we can continue to enjoy the awe of the night sky--while also minimizing the impact of light pollution on our health and on animal migration, breeding, and hunting.

EAC Night Sky Calendar 2025

March 14: Full moon and Total Lunar Eclipse - visible throughout North America, Mexico, Central America, and South America.

March 20: March Equinox, when the sun shines directly on the equator and there are nearly equal amounts of day and night throughout the world. First day of spring (vernal equinox) in the Northern Hemisphere and first day of fall (autumnal equinox) in the Southern Hemisphere.

March 29: New moon. The best time to see faint celestial objects such as galaxies and star clusters.

April 13: Full moon.

April 21: Look for Mercury low in the eastern sky just before sunrise.

April 22-23: Lyrids Meteor Shower. These meteors can sometimes produce bright dust trails that last for several seconds. Best viewing will be from a dark location after midnight.

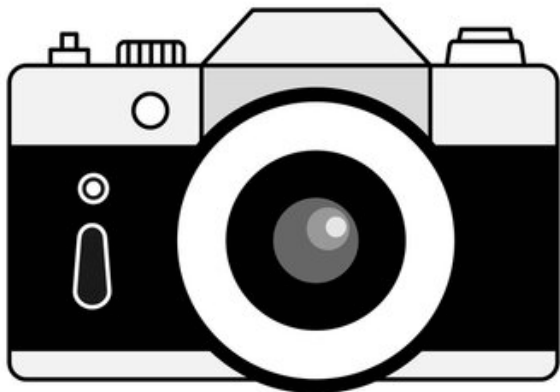
April 27: New moon.

Seniors - Interested in an Intergenerational Homeshare Program?

RCAP Solutions is thrilled to have received a generous \$10,000 grant from the Greater Worcester Community Foundation to pilot an Intergenerational HomeShare Program in collaboration with the Worcester Community Connections Coalition of YOU, Inc., an affiliate of Seven Hills Foundation, with additional help from other community partners. This initiative comes at a critical time as the City of Worcester and other municipalities across the state are grappling with an unprecedented housing crisis.

The proposed solution involves creating a program to match graduate students with senior homeowners in Worcester and the surrounding communities who have available rooms to rent - addressing housing shortages while fostering intergenerational connections.

To learn more, see the attachment below (may need to choose "see more" first).



New Paxton Photography Show

The next gallery show at the Paxton Senior Center Gallery will feature photographic images contributed by residents from local towns.

If you would like to participate, please contact the COA Director for further information at (508) 756-2833.

The show will run from February thru to the end of May.

Friends of Richards Memorial Library Book Fair

The annual Book Fair at Richards Memorial Library will be held Friday April 11th from 10am to 4pm and Saturday April 12th from 10am to 2pm. Make selections from hundreds of paperbacks and hard cover books covering a wide range of topics. Renew your membership in the Friends at the same time. Your generous support of the Book Fair, helps the Friends pay for children's programs, museum passes for the family and so much more. See you at the Fair.

PAXTON WOMAN'S CLUB 2025 SCHOLARSHIP

The Paxton Woman's Club is offering a \$2500 scholarship for graduating Paxton high seniors.

In order to be considered you must be: a Paxton resident, a high school senior graduating this year, pursuing their education at a college or at an institute of higher vocational training.

Completed submissions must contain a completed application which is available at the high school Guidance Office, two letters of recommendation at least one from a teacher, and your high school transcript. Completed applications should be mailed to: Patricia Belsito, 8 Glen Ellen Rd., Paxton, MA 01612 and must be received by April 15th. Decisions will be made known on April 25th. A common scholarship application may also be found on the Paxton Woman's Club website, <https://www.paxtonwomensclub.com> under Scholarship.

Holden Grange Announces Scholarship

Holden Grange is offering its W. Sumner and Howard L. Jordan Scholarship to a graduating high school senior or to a student in attendance at any recognized institution of learning beyond high school who has not received this scholarship previously. Scholarships are offered for a degree-granting program and a full-time or part-time non-degree granting vocational education program designed to prepare students for work in a trade or a specific field. Scholarship awards range from \$300 to \$1,000, depending upon type of program and enrollment status.

An applicant who does not belong to Holden Grange must reside in Holden, Paxton, Princeton, Rutland, or Sterling and be pursuing a course of study in agriculture/horticulture, veterinary science, or conservation/environment. A Holden Grange member in good standing for at least one year preceding the date of application is eligible to pursue any course of study.

The scholarship recipients will be named in June, and funds will be awarded to the applicant upon successful completion of the first semester with at least a 3.0 grade point average for a degree-granting program or evidence of successful completion for vocational courses.

An application in the form of a letter of intent, stating future educational goals and a description of three community activities or three Grange activities in which the applicant is involved, must be accompanied by a transcript and a letter of recommendation. All parts of the application must be emailed or postmarked by May 1st to Holden Grange, 26 Glenwood Place, Rutland, MA 01543. For more information on this scholarship or the Grange in general, please contact 508-886-2341 or holdengrange78@gmail.com.

New COA Art Gallery Show

The Paxton COA is happy to announce a new Cafe Gallery Art Show running March through May. It features photographic displays by Mary Baker, Joseph McKay, Desiree Tedford and Emerson Wheeler.

The gallery will be open to the public Monday through Friday from 10am to 1pm. Photographs in the exhibit are available for sale. Come enjoy this unique display and vote for the Best in Show.



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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Publishers • Mark & Karen Packard Editor & Designer • Emmanuel Ortiz Contributor • Melissa Southwell

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NEADS World Class Service Dogs Seeks Puppy Raisers for 13 Lab Puppies in Worcester and Franklin Counties

Press Release

NEADS World Class Service Dogs, based in Princeton, Mass. is actively seeking Full-Time Puppy Raisers for 13 Lab Service Dog in Training puppies. Puppies are available for placement in Worcester and Franklin counties, including Leominster, Fitchburg, Deerfield, Greenfield, Gardner, Princeton, and Shelburne, before the end of March.

These puppies, who have been working on crate training, leash walking, and housebreaking skills at the NEADS Early Learning Center, are ready for the next step in their development. Applications are available online at <https://www.tfaforms.com/4708625>.

Full-Time Puppy Raisers take Service Dogs in Training into their homes and provide care, socialization, and basic obedience training for 6 to 12 months, playing a crucial role in preparing these dogs for their future role as Service Dogs. A team raising program is also available, through which volunteers work as part of a team to collaboratively raise a dog for 6 to 12 months, working out a schedule to ensure the NEADS dog is cared for seven days a week.

Puppy Raiser candidates must be willing and able to:

- Provide a nurturing home environment for a Service Dog in Training

- Work on critical socialization and basic obedience, following NEADS outlined training protocols to expose the dog to everyday life in public settings, including malls, restaurants, and grocery stores to familiarize with various sounds, sights, and people.

- Physically manage a young and energetic dog
- Attend training sessions with a NEADS trainer. Classes are held virtually, at the NEADS campus, and at locations mutually convenient for the Raisers and Instructors

In addition to Full-Time Puppy Raisers, NEADS is also seeking Weekend Puppy Raisers. Volunteer Weekend Puppy Raisers take NEADS puppies out of the Prison PUP program each weekend for one to two years to work on house manners, socialization and training. NEADS has programs at various prisons, including Gardner and Framingham. NEADS also has puppies available for Weekend Puppy Raisers at its Princeton campus.

"The demand for highly trained Service Dogs continues to grow," says Heather Romanoff, Manager of Raiser Operations. "Puppy Raisers are essential partners in our mission and have a unique and rewarding opportunity to help prepare these amazing animals for a career of helping individuals with disabilities. It's a truly rewarding experience."



Puppy Raisers can be:

- Individuals, couples, families, and retirees with a passion for dogs.
- People who can dedicate time to training and socializing a young, energetic dog.
- Those who want to make a real difference in their community.

NEADS provides comprehensive support to Puppy Raisers, including all food, veterinary care, and necessary supplies for the dog and

ongoing, individualized support and training assistance from experienced professionals.

The process begins with the submission of an online application. If it is a good fit, a NEADS staff member will be in touch to schedule an orientation, which is followed by a home visit prior to receiving the Service Dog in Training. Questions can be submitted via an online form on www.neads.org.

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Locally-Run Charity Reaches Across Five Continents to Protect Animals Around the World

by Robin Riley

A quiet home in West Sterling may seem like unlikely headquarters for an international mission to feed, shelter, and care for animals in need. But, in addition to being home to Laura Simpson, her daughter, and her 11 rescued pets, this home is the center of operations for the Harmony Fund, a locally-based charity that has helped thousands of animals around the globe survive through freezing winters, illnesses and injuries, homelessness, loss, and abandonment.

The Harmony Fund helps small animal rescue teams whose funding needs may otherwise be overlooked to make a big impact in distressed and impoverished regions of the world. Whether feeding stray dogs and cats living in the streets, building sanctuaries and shelters for homeless animals, treating sick and injured animals, or protecting wildlife in their natural habitats, these teams of dedicated individuals provide a lifeline to the animals in their care.

Since its start in 2009, the Harmony Fund has given about \$9 million in aid to help homeless and abused animals in regions of Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas. Simpson, who is the founder and captain of the fund, is the former U.S. Director of the World Society for the Protection of Animals (now known as World Animal Protection), an international



Building insulated dog houses.

Photo Contributed

nonprofit. Under Simpson's leadership, World Animal Protection raised more than \$30 million. Originally from Connecticut, Simpson has been a Sterling resident for 25 years. As a journalism student at Northeastern University, she

interned at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Her experience there ignited in her a passion for safeguarding all forms of life. At World Animal Protection, first as a press officer and then as the

director of U.S. operations, Simpson worked with international media, traveled abroad, and helped secure disaster relief for the animal victims of natural disasters and war. Her

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Top 10 Tips to Manage the Stress of Home Selling

By Karen Packard

Experts agree that selling a home is one of the most stressful things you can do in life. It is right up there with divorce, getting fired and having a child. As exciting as buying and selling a home is, there is also a lot of stress involved.

I pride myself on making my clients experience as stress-free as possible. But here are some additional tips you can do to help keep your home sale experience more on the fun side than the stressful side. Home selling involves a whole list of logistical challenges like scheduling showings, waiting and reviewing offers, and preparing to move. On top of that, there's the uncertainty about when you'll sell and whether you'll be satisfied with the outcome and the price you get for your home. Will it be enough to enable you to move on to the next stage of your life?

There is a lot of things you can do but you also need to be prepared for the waiting. You will be waiting to hear from me for showings, waiting for offers, waiting for the buyers to compete the home inspection and get their financing approved. You will be waiting about six weeks from the time we accept and offer until the actual closing. So, the anxiety of things falling apart up until the closing can be difficult for some.

Here is a list of things you can do to reduce the stress.

1. Hire Karen Packard Real Estate to list your home. I understand the stress of selling and I will do everything I can to reduce that stress. I also have a list of local resources to help you with anything from junk removal to selling extra furniture if needed.

2. Hire movers ahead of time. Some moving companies book out in advance. Don't wait until the last minute to arrange for a company to help you with the large, heavy items.

3. Start early. If you have lived in your home for many years, you will have accumulated a lot of items that need to be throw away, given to charity, donated or recycled. Why not get this done before listing? If you are not taking it with you to the next location, it is a great way to feel prepared and reduce stress by doing this prior to listing the house for sale.

4. It can be extremely stressful when getting ready to sell if you think you have to preform major renovations. Call me first! You may be able to get your house ready without needing to do the costly renovations you are considering. I know what buyers want and what you

will get as a return on your investment. Talk to me before undergoing any major renovations just for the purpose of selling. We can discuss together which projects are necessary and which will be a waste of time and money.

5. Another way to reduce stress is to discuss your options for showings and open houses. I work with my clients to manage a schedule that works for you, your family and your personal schedule. We need to allow buyers to view the house but I can work with you to arrange windows for showings to make it easier for your family.

6. I also try to make the showings as low stress as possible. For open houses, I will bring everything needed, turn on all the lights and prep the house. At the end of the open house, I will make sure all the doors are locked, lights are off and I even bring a clean up box with me to make sure there is no mess left behind while I am there. I want you to come home and feel relaxed after I have been in the house.

7. I will give you a list of things you can do ahead to prepare on your side. Having a checklist of what you should do will help manage your expectations of how much should be done ahead of time.

8. Come up with a plan of where to go during showings. If you have a friend or family member that lives locally, check with them to see if you can hang out there for a bit while buyers are at the house. Having a plan of where to go, will make it easier than trying to come up with a plan each day.

9. Plan some self-care time. Making sure to take a break from the stress of selling a home to enjoy life is important. Take the dog for a walk, bring the kids to the park, enjoy a workout, or have a date night with your loved ones. Don't make your house sale all consuming.

10. Keep the stress in perspective. You have decided to move for a reason. Keep your focus on why you wanted to sell. Selling a house is a lot to do, but it is only for a couple months. Once the house is sold, you will be onto the next stage you have been planning for.

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to me at kpackardrealtor@gmail.com

April Seminar: Real Estate Hazards – What You Need To Know Before Selling including pyrrhotite, PFAS, radon, asbestos, mold, lead paint and other hazards.

Friday April 4th at 6pm- 7pm

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Garden Guru: Spring Cleaning Tips

By Mark Packard



When was the last time you saw a brand new garden center open from scratch? I remember when we opened Sterling Greenery for the first time in 2001. Karen and I were only 24 years old at the time. Sterling Greenery had laid dormant for 6 years. Many people attempted to open it and failed. The location is great, but it is hard physical work 7 days a week in whatever weather mother nature throws at us. Now 25 years and some gray hair later we are celebrating 25 years in business and we are doing better than ever with some exciting new services that we think people will love. I hope to see all of you soon!

Spring cleaning should wait until the temps are consistently in the 50s to avoid disturbing or harming beneficial insects. Be careful when clearing leaves and debris because Crocus and Daffodil bulbs will be popping up underneath them. Removing all leaves and debris from around shrubs and trees early in the season will prevent rot and fungus growth. If you are going to spread mulch around your trees and shrubs, pull excess mulch away first and discard it. New mulch should be applied to existing beds every year but be careful not to bury the bottom of trees and shrubs. Burying the bark of trees and shrubs with mulch could rot the bark and kill them. Mulch breaks down 1 inch per year and amends the soil naturally. It also creates a weed barrier and holds moisture in the ground helping to prevent your plants from drying out. For additional weed prevention sprinkle Preen on the beds before mulching. This product does not kill existing plants but does help prevent new weeds from growing.



string trimmer upside down and cutting vertically along the edge to keep the grass from creeping in.

Fertilizing your gardens can be done with a well-balanced fertilizer like 10-10-10. You can sprinkle this granular fertilizer on the ground before mulching and gently rake into the soil to help with bigger and longer lasting blooms. Now is also a good time to add triple phosphate to make your hydrangeas bloom better this summer. To make hydrangea blossoms blue add aluminum sulphate and to make them pink add hydrated lime.

Pruning should be done to remove any winter damage. Prune close to the main stalk or right after new growth. Do not prune back Hydrangea, Rhododendron, Azalea, Andromeda or other plants that have buds from last fall. You will be cutting off your flowers. A good general rule is to prune plants right after they flower.

Here's a cool trick. If your Forsythia is not blooming yet, cut a few branches and put them in a vase inside. They will bloom inside and give you some early spring color!

Gardening questions? Email mark@sterlinggreenery.com

Bark Mulch is made primarily from the bark of trees and does not attract insects. There are however some companies that are grinding pallets and other wood products, coloring them, and calling them bark mulch. This is not the same. Make sure your mulch is made from bark, not ground wood. Most mulches are colored for consistency but there are some products that are specifically not colored. Hemlock blend is a mix of hemlock, pine, and spruce. It has a reddish brown color and contains artificial coloring in most cases. Black mulch is a color enhanced pine mulch and is growing in popularity every year. Natural or aged pine mulch is brown and rarely has any color added to it but check with your supplier to make sure.

Some people are starting to use decorative stone in their beds instead of bark mulch but this is not recommended. The stone holds heat and dries out your plants, it doesn't create a weed barrier, and does not break down to amend the soil naturally. You should however do a 1-2 ft. wide apron of stone around your house or commercial building to help prevent fire hazard, insects, and drip edge runoff. You should also maintain a 6 in. minimum distance between the ground and the siding on your house to prevent rot.

Cutting a fresh edge around your beds will add a professional look to your landscape. Your edge should be 4-6 inches deep and don't fill the edge with mulch. Maintain the edge weekly by turning your





Tax Talks

with Jennifer Lovett, IRS Enrolled Agent (EA)

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

Tax season is here again! With the change in administration and news stories stirring up confusion, we are all keeping an eye on the latest developments coming from state and federal lawmakers. This year there are several significant changes proposed to the tax code that are currently being debated. These changes could have a direct impact on all taxpayers—whether you’re a homeowner, small business owner, or an individual simply trying to make sense of your tax filing. The hottest topic is if the sweeping changes introduced by the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) of 2017 will be extended. The TCJA, which brought about significant reforms to both individual and corporate tax rates, is set to expire for many provisions at the end of 2025. The burning question: Will Congress extend the TCJA, or will we see a return to pre-2017 tax laws?

The TCJA was one of the most substantial tax reforms in recent U.S. history. Signed into law by President Trump in December 2017. The TCJA’s most notable changes being the reduction in tax rates for most income brackets, increased standard deductions, capping of state and local tax (SALT) deductions, the corporate tax rate being slashed from 35% to 21%, QBI for small businesses, and expanding the child tax credit from \$1000 up to \$2000. These changes have led to significant tax savings for many Americans. If the economy continues to perform well and tax revenues increase, some lawmakers may be more inclined to extend the TCJA, seeing it as a boost to economic growth. Conversely, if the economy falters, there may be calls for more targeted relief measures instead of broad tax cuts.

If Congress does not extend the provisions of the TCJA, individual taxpayers could see their tax rates increase, and some of the key deductions and credits could revert to pre-TCJA levels. Higher tax rates and lower deductions on the individual side and on the business side, if the corporate tax rate reverts to 35%, it could increase the tax burden for many corpora-

tions, potentially leading to higher prices for consumers and a reduction in corporate investments.

For those who rely on investments for income—whether through stocks, bonds, or real estate—changes to the tax treatment of capital gains and dividends are significant. Some proposals seek to increase taxes on long-term capital gains, potentially raising the rate on earnings from investments. The proposals range from gradual increases in tax rates to more targeted changes aimed at high-income earners, so the impact may differ depending on your income level and investment activity.

Some of the tax reforms being voted on focus on expanding benefits like the Child Tax Credit and deductions for dependents. A proposal to increase the Child Tax Credit would provide greater relief for families with young children and could potentially lead to larger refunds for families with children under the age of 18. Finally, some of the proposed changes are aimed at altering estate and inheritance tax laws. For families concerned about passing on wealth to the next generation, proposed reforms could either raise or lower the exemption thresholds for estate taxes. If these changes go into effect, the amount of inheritance you can pass on tax-free may either increase or decrease, depending on the direction of the reforms.

As the voting process continues, including the recent passing by the House on the “big, beautiful bill”, be sure to keep an eye on updates from local government and the IRS to ensure you don’t miss any important deadlines or changes that might affect your taxes. Review your current tax situation by looking at how the TCJA has impacted your tax situation. Have you benefited from the lower tax rates or increased standard deduction? If so, be prepared for the possibility that these provisions may change in 2026. If you’re expecting your tax rates to increase, you might want to adjust your tax planning strategies now. Reach out to local experts and create a team and remember that being proactive about your taxes is always the best approach.

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NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY from page 4

work gave her a global perspective on animal welfare and the human heroes striving to ensure the well-being and safety of animals in need.

“I began to take note of the ‘underdogs’ of animal rescue,” she said. “These are the small but powerful rescue squads who are saving lives hand-over-fist.”

Simpson was deeply affected by the daily hardships faced by these rescue workers who, despite their limited resources, persisted in providing the best care they could. “They sacrifice, sometimes going without food for themselves so that their animals can eat,” she said. “I found that grants to these underdog organizations brought the most dramatic turnarounds, and I began to cultivate a network of heroes who shared a common vision of making the world a more humane place.”

With the intent to immerse herself in raising her young daughter while aiding resource-challenged animal rescue teams around the world, Simpson launched Harmony Fund from her home in Sterling with money from her retirement account. Today, the Harmony Fund is celebrating 15 years of charitable work helping more than 100 rescue teams each year. The life-changing outcomes for thousands of animals because of this aid have exceeded Simpson’s expectations in extraordinary ways. One example is Harmony Fund’s support for animal rescue operations in Ukraine.



Holding puppies at Fundacia Sky.

Photos Contributed

Within days of the 2022 invasion, the Harmony Fund began one of the largest U.S.-led animal relief missions in Ukraine. “Because the fund had already been working with rescue centers and sanctuaries in Ukraine

for years, we were able to pivot almost instantly,” Simpson said.

She began by arranging for multiple shipments of food and veterinary medicines to be brought into Ukraine from Romania and Poland. As soon

as volunteers filled one 18-wheeler with pet food and medical supplies, another truck would be lined up behind it, ready to be stocked. The biggest challenge facing the volunteers

DOG SHOW CONTINUED PAGE 12

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A member of our design team will reach out to you prior to the appointment to better understand your needs and to make sure the right plants are selected to thrive in their new home!

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Our designers will pick a selection of flowers, shrubs, and trees from our garden center that will compliment your yard and suit your individual needs.

Once they arrive at your house, all of the plants will be laid out in the exact spots that they will be planted.

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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Carefully Consider Social Security Decisions

Your Social Security benefits can be an important part of your retirement income — but when should you start collecting them? It’s a big decision, so you’ll want to consider your options carefully.

Essentially, you’ll need to decide whether you’re going to take your benefits as early as possible — age 62 — or if you should wait until your “full retirement age” or even longer. If you begin accepting benefits at 62, they’ll be about 30% lower than if you waited until your full retirement age, which is 67 if you were born in 1960 or later. And if you wait until 70, your benefits will be about 24% higher than at your full retirement age.

In deciding when to claim benefits, you’ll want to weigh these factors:

- **Income needs** — If you need the money to help meet your daily cost of living, then you may not feel you have much of a choice about when to take Social Security. However, if you have sufficient income from other sources, such as your 401(k) or other retirement accounts, you may be able to delay taking benefits until they’re much larger.
- **Employment** — If you’re still working and you haven’t reached your full retirement age yet, it might be a good idea to wait before claiming Social Security because your benefits will be reduced by \$1 for every \$2 earned above \$23,400. In the year in which you reach your full retirement age, your benefits will be reduced by \$1 for every \$3 earned above \$62,160. (But once you reach your full retirement age, Social Security will adjust your payments to credit you for the months during which your benefits were lowered because of your income.)
- **Life expectancy** — None of us can say for certain how long we’ll live — but you may have some hints. For example, if you have a family history of

longevity, and you’re in good health, you might decide it makes sense to delay taking Social Security until your full retirement age, or even later, as you could potentially have more years of receiving larger checks.

- **Spouse** — If you’re married, decisions about when to claim benefits could affect you or your spouse. The spouse with lower Social Security payments may be eligible to receive spousal benefits, which, when combined with their own benefits, can reach up to 50% of the higher-benefit spouse’s payment at their full retirement age. To qualify, the lower-benefit spouse’s benefit at their full retirement age must be less than half of the other spouse’s full-retirement-age benefit. But if the lower-benefit spouse claims their benefits before their full retirement age, their own retirement benefit and the spousal benefit will be reduced. Also, the lower-benefit spouse reaches their maximum benefit amount at their full retirement age — they won’t receive additional benefits even if they or the higher-benefit spouse delays taking benefits past their respective full retirement ages.

One other point to keep in mind: If the higher-benefit spouse claims early, the survivor benefit to the other spouse is reduced, but if the higher-benefit spouse delays their benefit beyond their full retirement age, the survivor benefit is increased.

By making the appropriate choices, you can help maximize your Social Security benefits — and possibly enjoy a more comfortable retirement.

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

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

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Richards Memorial Library Programs March - April 2025 Events

The Paxton Library is located at 44 Eichards Avenue, Paxton, MA 01612
For more information about their events please call 508-754-0793 • Website: <https://rmlpaxton.org/>

ALL MONTH

Scratch Art Tuesday - 3/18 through Saturday 4/5

EVENTS

Dog Man Day! - Wednesday 3/19, 2-4pm Drop In

Drop in anytime between 2-4pm for a Dog Man scavenger hunt, raffle, games, crafts, snack bags to go, and more. For school-age children on the WRSD 1/2 day.

Dog Man Scavenger Hunt - Wednesday 3/19 through Saturday 4/5

Search the J/Y room for Dog Man clues. Find them all and earn a small prize.

Friends of Richards Memorial Library (FRML) Meeting - Tuesday 3/25, 7-8pm

Pirate Scavenger Hunt with Community Connections - Friday 3/28, 10-11am

Fun activities for young children and their caretakers. Plan to be outdoors if weather permits. For more information, visit Wachusettcfce.com

Graphic Novel Book Club

Ages 8-12

Each month, receive a featured graphic novel, along with a small treat.

Read and enjoy.

Optional: Join other graphic novel fans the last Wednesday of each month, 4-4:40pm, for discussion and fun activities related to the book.

The next meeting will be Wednesday 3/26. We will be discussing Grace Needs Space by Benjamin A. Wilgus.

Register now RMLPaxton.org/tweens

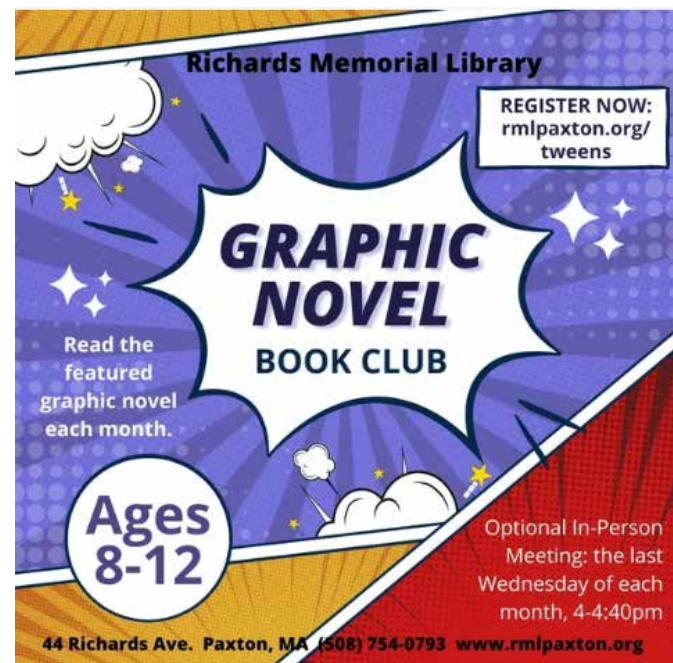
WEEKLY EVENTS

LEGO Challenge - Tuesdays, 3:30-4:30pm

Take the weekly challenge or build from your imagination. Completed challenges will be displayed at the library. All materials provided. Ages 5+ due to small parts.

Outdoor Story and Playtime - Wednesdays, 10:30-11:15am

Join us for outdoor play and learning in the beautiful library yard or fun indoors in inclement weather. We sing songs, go on scavenger hunts, read stories, create, and play.



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LIBRARY NEWS

Open Art Studio - Thursdays in March, 6-7:30pm
 Looking for more creative self-care time at the Library? This is an opportunity to create in a collaborative environment with other artists.
 —Bring your works-in-progress and supplies to this drop-in program.
 — No formal instruction will be provided.
 *Please leave turpentine and other high-odor solvents at home.

LOOKING AHEAD....

Friends of Richards Memorial Library (FRML) Annual Book Sale
Friday April 11, 2025 from 10am-4pm
Saturday April 12, 2025 from 10am-2pm

Update on Wowbrary
 The library will not be renewing Wowbrary during FY25 due to budget constraints. Browse new titles at Paxton.cwmars.org.

Winter Weather Reminder

RML Storm Closing Policy
 The Richards Memorial Library may be closed due to inclement weather if the Wachusett Regional School District is closed. When WRSD is delayed or canceled, library programs are canceled for that day.

The library may be opened at the discretion of the director, after the weather has improved and the parking area and sidewalks have been cleared.

Please check the website www.rmlpaxton.org or call ahead (508) 754-0793 for the open status.

FROM HEARTBREAK TO HOPE from page 1



Remembering Tyler and his love for baseball.

Photo Courtesy

the family, along with their friends and the WooSox try to find some way to help others through Tyler's Teammates, the family struggles with profound sadness. "Every day is the same day," Trudell explains. "There is nothing like watching your children play baseball, and I just loved it."

Raising funds is accomplished through the sale of the bracelets at Polar Park as well as the Ten West Market on Route 122 on the

Holden / Rutland line, and Tyler's uncle runs an annual fishing derby. Contributions may also be made through the WooSox Foundation site, and directly to Tyler's Teammates.

The family and the WooSox appreciate everyone who supports Tyler's Teammates and in doing so, helps youngsters throughout the region who might not be able to play youth baseball be able to do so, while at the same time continuing to remember Tyler.

was how to distribute supplies in the face of widespread rocket attacks and unpredictable troop movements.

"We used warehouses along the border and even filled a former newsroom to the ceiling with sacks of kibble," Simpson said. "We would stockpile the food in any secure location we could find, and our volunteer partners would come by van to load their vehicles and begin the dangerous, circuitous route to animal shelters in various cities."

Many of the shelters took direct hits and were partially destroyed. Several volunteers and shelter workers lost their lives in rocket attacks.

"It's a wound that will not heal," Simpson said. "There is a steep emotional cost in this work. We stay strong because we must, and we owe it to those who lost their lives because they stayed behind to care for the animals when everyone around them fled."

The Harmony Fund continues to provide food and care for animals who are being evacuated from the front lines of the war and an ongoing food supply to the rescue centers and volunteers feeding animals who live in the streets.

Food is one of the most critical needs for the underdog animal rescue squads around the world. The Harmony Fund Food Bank sponsors the delivery of food supplies to animal

shelters and sanctuaries that care for large numbers of rescued animals in a humane way and often face extreme food shortages. It supports street patrols of volunteers who feed homeless animals daily. The Food Bank operates in Ukraine, Turkey, Bosnia, Serbia, Romania, Venezuela, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, Brazil, Egypt, Morocco, Lebanon, and other countries.

Sasha's Shelter in Serbia has been a Food Bank recipient for more than a decade. When Simpson first learned of this shelter, it was in dire need of assistance, with 750 dogs who had been surviving on stale bread discarded by bakeries and scraps from the local butchers. The dogs had not eaten in two days when Harmony Fund was contacted. Within hours, Simpson was able to review footage of the shelter and conduct interviews with volunteers. Harmony Fund quickly sent a shipment of food and continues to do so each month.

"The dogs here all came from homelessness, hunger, and abuse, but now they spend their days running and exploring the grounds. They are not confined to stressful cages, but instead, they play and nap in the sun and ask for cuddles from the workers," Simpson said. "It's not nearly the life that they deserve, and

I wish that each of them had a loving home, but this is the finest care that we can provide and is dramatically better than the lives they once knew."

The Harmony Fund has helped the shelter's founder, Sasha Pesic, to continue with his work despite the challenges. "I am endlessly grateful to you for the past 13 years of sending donations every month for food and everything related to the shelter," Pesic said. "I am so grateful to Harmony Fund and every person who makes it a force of goodness."

The Harmony Fund is fueled by ordinary people with an extraordinary mission to help animals in need. Donations of every size enable the support of rescue operations internationally. Most of the time, Harmony Fund is the only animal relief organization willing to aid the underdog rescuers.

No two operations are identical. Some involve huge shipments of food, while other requests for aid may be in the form of shelter repairs, emergency rescue missions, wildlife protection, medical supplies, or free spay/neuter clinics. "We've woven quite a tapestry of rescue operations that touch five continents," Simpson said.

The kind people who donate to Harmony Fund help save the lives of endangered animals around the

world. Due to a series of emergency response initiatives over the past year, the fund is struggling to keep pace with the numbers of animals and animal rescue teams who have no other means of support, and they are asking for your help.

The Harmony Fund needs donations to maintain its food bank, which provides meals for thousands of homeless animals and for animal shelters internationally. No amount is too small. Those who are able to lend a hand can visit the Harmony Fund website at HarmonyFund.org to make a charitable donation.

Scan the QR code to go to the Harmony Fund website.

Sidebar: Suti the Cat Has Come a Long Way to Find Her Forever Home

This lovely girl has come all the way from Turkey, where she was rescued from homelessness and abuse, in hopes of finding a home right here, in Central Massachusetts. Suti loves people, and has a sweet disposition tempered with a touch of sass. She is an indoor kitty who would love a quiet home where she is the only cat. She is spayed and vaccinated. Harmony Fund will cover the cost of unplanned veterinary care for Suti, if needed.

To meet Suti or learn more about her, please contact Laura at Harmony Fund: laura@harmonyfund.org or text 978-712-4365.

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"It was one of those March days when the sun shines hot and the wind blows cold: when it is summer in the light, and winter in the shade."
— Charles Dickens