

# the HOLYOKE Sun

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## Council approves rule change

By Gregory A. Scibelli  
gscibelli@turley.com

HOLYOKE – Any member of the Holyoke City Council can go to the law department and seek a legal opinion on an issue.

That new rule was passed 9-3 by the council at its Nov. 6 meeting.

Ward 5 Councilor Linda Vacon was unhappy with the mayor vetoing her order to seek a legal opinion on what she felt was an invalid vote to make a funding transfer. The funding transfer was for a contracted service to help the city deal with its ongoing financial issues. The city is under an order from the Department of Revenue to get certain accounting updated and in order. Mayor Joshua Garcia is contracting an outside firm to assist with that process.

When the vote was taken, Vacon alleged the vote took place after the city council meeting should have legally concluded due to it

See COUNCIL, page 8

## The Nutcracker preview performance at library



The Holyoke Public Library will again provide the historic setting for a preview performance of The Nutcracker on Saturday morning, Dec. 6. Dancers from the Massachusetts Academy of Ballet will perform in full costume beginning at 11 a.m. Events planned for before and after the performance include a drawing for a set of free tickets to the full performance of The Nutcracker on Dec. 20 at HCC, photos with the dancers, and take-and-make gingerbread house kits. There will be a children's ornament-decorating craft activity after the performance (11:30 to 12 noon), DIY gift-wrapping for everyone in the Teen Room (9:30 a.m. to 12 noon), and digital family photos against a holiday backdrop on the Fourth Floor (all day). All events are free. The preview begins promptly at 11 a.m., so please come early to get a good viewing spot. The library will also be open with regular services that day, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Submitted photo

## VOICE: Creating a way for veterans of Western Massachusetts

By Emily-Rose Pappas  
epappas@turley.com

REGION – The Veterans Outreach Into Community Engagement, or VOICE, is a group of members of Western Massachusetts dedicated to helping veterans.

Composed of Veterans Agents, veterans, nonprofits, small businesses, and beyond, VOICE is a group that prioritizes the veteran living in the Hampden, Hampshire, Franklin, and the Berkshires Counties.

“It started with a veteran employment and opportuni-

ty approach, and it's really blossomed into something more for all veterans. It's such an amazing network, and its intended for any program, whether a governmental department, business, or nonprofit that has a veteran program that they administer, and it's to collaborate,” said Stephanie Shaw, Chair of VOICE and Director of Veterans Services in Chicopee.

VOICE has been going on for at least 20 years, focusing on cross-sharing resources between veteran agencies, small businesses,

and nonprofit organizations that work to serve the veteran in many different ways.

Shaw has been engaging with VOICE for the past fifteen years, since 2010, and has seen organizations like Encompass, Compassion Care, Veterans' Inc., and Project New Hope come together to sit in person at their meetings to collaborate.

“It's about ensuring that veterans are prioritized. We look at it as it's about the veterans, and I think that really helps make us unique. There really is something unique about our cohesiveness and

the bonds that these representatives have,” said Shaw. “These people are consistent and show up, and after doing this for so long, it's invigorating to sit down once a month to collaborate and support one another.”

VOICE works hard to create ways to ensure that veterans across all four counties in Western Massachusetts can access care and resources like fuel assistance, employment help, connections to food pantries, and also enjoy events for veterans and coffee hours at different places in towns all over.

“It's so that any veteran we come across can have access to more, and be able to access more from neighbors,” said Shaw.

75 to 80 different entities offer a full program or have specific offerings for veterans to access, and take part in working alongside VOICE so that all representatives of veterans can access this essential information.

“Not everyone in that room is a veteran, but they really care about veterans, and that's what makes this

See VOICE, page 8

*“It's so that any veteran we come across can have access to more, and be able to access more from neighbors,”*

**- Stephanie Shaw**  
Chair of VOICE and  
Director of Veterans  
Services in Chicopee

## Student-written play debuts at De La Luz

HOLYOKE – On Thursday, Nov. 13, the De La Luz Soundstage was the setting for a unique performance.

High school drama clubs

typically perform plays or musicals on the stages of their own schools, but HHS Student Fynn Maldonado brought his original script to De La Luz and created a din-

ner mystery theater.

The show offered an immersive blend of mystery, laughter, and suspense—along with a three-course meal. As the drama builds,

patrons collected clues, piece together evidence, and competed to solve the mystery before the final act is revealed. Every table had a chance to uncover the truth.

## Parking study shows underutilization of public parking areas

By Gregory A. Scibelli  
gscibelli@turley.com

HOLYOKE – A Parking Advisory Board was recently charged with doing a study of the town's public parking in the downtown area. The board worked with a firm to conduct the study and recently presented the results of that study to the Ordinance Committee last week.

According to the study, there is a number of areas of underutilized parking throughout the city.

“Overall, parking in the study area is underutilized,” the report states. “Which is consistent with prior parking studies for Downtown Holyoke.”

According to the report, the highest utilization of on-street parking spaces is around 11 a.m.

Despite that higher utilization, which approaches 50%, 85% would be the target usage to achieve well-utilized parking, and the city's downtown area falls very short of that.

The study did identify what areas are used the most.

“At the busiest times of the day, parts of Main St. and High St. are filling up and achieving higher utilization levels, but there is parking availability on adjacent blocks and nearby off-street lots.”

The average utilization of on-street parking spaces is approximately 38%. Handicapped accessible parking utilization is 11% and off-street parking spaces is about 20%.

One thing the study also identified is a lack

See PARKING, page 8



The mystery continues. See more photos on page 6.

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli

# Chamber food drive expanding with partnership

HOLYOKE – The Greater Holyoke Chamber of Commerce (GHC) is expanding its food drive, strengthening its commitment to end local food insecurity through new collaborations with key business partners. This enhanced initiative will benefit The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts and its network partner, Margaret’s Pantry, ensuring all donations collected directly sup-

port residents within the Greater Holyoke community. This partnership amplifies the community’s capacity to support a critical cause. The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts plays an essential role in the region, distributing food for 15 million meals annually to 122,000 individuals. By working with Margaret’s Pantry, the Chamber ensures that contributions made in

Holyoke stay in Holyoke, addressing the immediate needs of local families. To increase accessibility for donors, two convenient drop-off locations have been established with the support of business partners. 850 High Street LLC and its tenants will collectively accept donations at their location, which is easily accessible from Route 391. Holyoke Mall at Ingleside will also serve

as a collection site, offering extensive hours, including weekends, for community members to contribute. Donation drop-off hours are as follows:  
 • 850 High Street: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Tuesday and Thursday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
 • Holyoke Mall at Ingleside (Security Office): Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.;

Saturday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.; and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. In recognition of this community effort, a Chamber Power Hour event will be hosted at 850 High Street on Dec. 3 from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The event will feature a check presentation to The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, highlighting the collective impact of the community’s generosity.

## Holiday Fair on Dec. 9

HOLYOKE – St. Peter’s Annual Gingerbread House Fair will be held on Saturday, Dec. 6 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Open for holiday shopping. Homemade crafts, decorations, food, gifts, and more, including lunch to purchase will be available. You can build your own gingerbread house. St. Peter’s is located at 34 Jarvis Ave., Holyoke.

## Providence Place to host free concert

HOLYOKE – The last concert of the Fall 2025 series is here. Holyoke High School Madrigal Choir and 3 Octave Bell Choir will be performing Sunday, Dec. 14 at 2 p.m. in Our Mother of Sorrows Chapel at Providence Place.



Providence Place is located at 5 Gamelin St. in Holyoke, right behind the Holyoke Mall. The Holyoke High School musicians are directed by Mark Todd and will be performing a variety of musical numbers for our delightful holiday

concert. This event is free and open to the public with ample parking available, no RSVP is necessary. For more information on the concert or if you are interested in learning more about our retirement community, please contact Katelyn Bacon at 413-534-9700 or email kbacon@providenceplace.org.

## Library Giving Tree seeks sponsors

HOLYOKE – This year the Holyoke Public Library is partnering with Margaret’s Pantry and the Sisters of Providence Ministries to collect holiday gifts for children who may not be lucky enough to get everything on their list. To participate please do the following:  
 • Stop by the lobby of the

Holyoke Public Library.  
 • Select one (or more) ornament(s) from the giving tree.  
 • Take one of the instruction fliers from the giving tree table.  
 • Purchase only the item listed.  
 • Return the unwrapped present with the attached

ornament with the child’s information to the Circulation desk at the Holyoke Library no later than Friday, Dec. 12 at 3 p.m.  
 • Gifts returned after this date and time will have to be held as extra items for next year.  
 Thank you for participating in this season of giving.

## Community invited to help chart future of HCC

HOLYOKE – Regional leaders from diverse sectors of the Pioneer Valley economy will gather at Holyoke Community College on Tuesday, Dec. 2, for a discussion that will help create the next chapter in the college’s 80-year history.

The general public is also invited to attend this breakfast event, “Shaping the Future: A Community Conversation,” from 7:30 to 10 a.m. in the PeoplesBank Conference Room (301/303) in the Kittredge Center for Business and Workforce Development, on the main HCC campus, 303 Homestead Ave.

The panelists include: Megan Burke, president of the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts; Anne Kandilis, director of Springfield WORKS; Frank

Martínez López, executive director of Enlace de Familias; Jason Pacheco, director of workforce planning and analytics at Baystate Health; Javier Reyes, chancellor of the University of Massachusetts Amherst; and Aaron Vega, director for the Office of Planning and Economic Development for the city of Holyoke, and incoming president and chief executive officer of the Western Mass Economic Development Council.

Among the other attendees will be state Rep. Pat Duffy, John Reiff, director of civic learning and engagement with the Mass. Dept. of Higher Education, and representatives from MassHire Holyoke, Way Finders, Holyoke Health Center, Tech Foundry, Holyoke

Public Schools, Dean Tech, Nuestras Raices, and the Public Health Institute of Western Mass.

President Timmons will kick off the event and set the stage for this community conversation. A question-and-answer session will follow the panel discussion.

“At Holyoke Community College, student success is a community effort,” said President George Timmons. “When our students thrive — when they graduate, transfer, gain new skills, launch careers, and become leaders — our entire region benefits. These leaders, our education partners, and others will share perspectives on the opportunities and challenges facing our community, sparking table conversations that will inform how we write the next chapter for HCC — and

for our region.” The event is part of “SP 3.0,” the third iteration of the college’s strategic planning process, which began with the start of the fall semester. The college drafted its first strategic plan in 2018. That plan was refreshed in 2021.

So far, emerging priorities for Strategic Plan 3.0 include collaboration and partnerships, and workforce and post-graduation success.

“Together, we’ve achieved many of the ambitious goals of our previous strategic plans, creating pathways and opportunities that have transformed lives and strengthened our community,” said President Timmons. “Strategic Plan 3.0 is the next chapter in that shared work, and we need to hear as many voices as possible to help us chart the course ahead.”

## Mall announces annual Salvation Army fundraising campaign has begun

HOLYOKE – The Holyoke Mall is proud to partner with The Salvation Army for their annual Red Kettle Campaign Kick Off event. This event signals the start of an initiative which funds programs and services for thousands of families, youth, and senior citizens in our community and across Massachusetts each year.

Bell ringers will be accepting donations at various exterior entrances and interior locations across the shopping center until Dec. 24. The event will also feature a performance from the Holyoke High School Madrigal Choir.

To complement the Red Kettle Campaign, The

Salvation Army is set to host another annual tradition, the Angel Tree. This program provides clothing and toys for children in need.

According to The Salvation Army, each Angel Tree is decorated with numbered paper angel tags with the first name, age, and gender of a child who is in need of a gift. Contributors remove one, or more, tags from the tree and purchase appropriate gifts for the child or children described on the tags. Guests are encouraged to visit the Angel Tree on the Upper Level near AT&T beginning on Friday, Nov. 14 and until Wednesday, Dec. 24.

## City to hold tree lighting, ‘Parade of Lights’ event on Saturday, Dec. 6

HOLYOKE – Join Mayor Joshua Garcia and the Holyoke Parks and Recreation Department as the City hosts its Annual Christmas Tree Lighting and Parade of Lights celebration on Saturday, Dec. 6. From 3 to 5 p.m. at the Holyoke Merry Go Round, enjoy unlimited free rides, take pictures with holiday characters and visit with Dazzleday Balloon Artists. From 5 to 6 p.m. at City Hall, warm up with hot chocolate and cookies while enjoying a

performance by the Holyoke High School Bell Choir and Madrigal Choir.

Watch the Parade of Lights depart from the Holyoke High School parking lot at 5:45 p.m., traveling to Hampshire Street over to High Street arriving at City Hall. Mayor Garcia will light the Christmas Tree at 6 p.m.

For more information, please contact the Holyoke Parks and Recreation Department at 413-322-5620 or visit www.holyoke.org.

## LIBRARY TO HOLD BRASS ENSEMBLE SING-ALONG



There will be a Christmas sing-along free and open to the public by the Fanfare Brass Ensemble on Thursday, Dec. 11 at the Holyoke Public Library, 250 Chestnut St, Holyoke. The 10-part group’s program: O Come All Ye Faithful, Three Ships, Three Kings, Westminster Carol, Jingle Bell Rock, Twelve Days of Christmas, Away in the Manger, A Christmas Cannon, Jingle Bells, White Christmas, Sleigh Ride, Oh Holy Night, Rockin’ Around the Christmas Tree, Angels from the Realms of Glory, All I want for Christmas, O little town of Bethlehem, We Need a Little Christmas, Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer, Stars and Stripes for Christmas and more. *Submitted photo*

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<b>CLOSED THURSDAY</b>	
<b>Fri., Nov. 28th</b> Eagle Eyes	<b>Fri., Dec. 6th</b> Kilashandra

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This group will be held in zoom, is educational, confidential, and free.

Please contact **Pat James 413-726-8661.**

# Santa Sprint to support Holyoke Pride set for Dec. 13

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Pride will launch the city's first-ever Santa Sprint on Saturday, Dec. 13. Registration opens at 10 a.m. at De La Luz Soundstage, located at 114 Race Street, and the spirited dash will follow the scenic Canalwalk on Race Street. Racers—ages 18 and older—will run, walk, or strut in Santa gear from Euphorium Dispensary to The Cubit building, raising support for Holyoke Pride's

growing series of June events culminating in the 2026 PrideFest on June 27.

Participants can register online now at [holyokeypride.org](http://holyokeypride.org) for a Starting Line Pass, available on a sliding scale donation beginning at \$20, granting entry into the race and helping to fund Holyoke Pride programming. Those who want to support without running can choose a Cheer Squad Pass, which allows spectators or remote support-

ers to donate any amount to benefit Holyoke Pride. The Santa Sprint is free to attend, and community members are encouraged to line the route and cheer.

"This event brings together everything that makes Holyoke special—community, joy, and the commitment to show up for one another," said Holyoke City Councilor, and Pride Committee member, Juan Anderson-Burgos. "The

Santa Sprint is a fun way to welcome the holiday season while supporting Pride and the work it takes to create meaningful, inclusive celebrations for everyone."

Holyoke Pride and the Santa Sprint is sponsored by Holyoke Art, a nonprofit strengthening Holyoke's creative and cultural ecosystem. Through its fiscal sponsorship program, Holyoke Art provides administrative and financial support to grass-

roots initiatives like Holyoke Pride, helping community-led events thrive.

To help make this first-ever Santa Sprint unforgettable, both runners and spectators are encouraged to dress in their most festive Santa outfits—beards, hats, bells, and bright red everything—to fill the Canalwalk with holiday spirit and community pride.

For race details, registration, or donations,

visit [holyokeypride.org](http://holyokeypride.org).



## Santa returns to mall

HOLYOKE – Santa Claus is set to make his return from the North Pole to Holyoke Mall on Friday, Nov. 21, with a special arrival event this Saturday, Nov. 22. The magic begins at 11 a.m. on Saturday with a fire truck arrival, at the mall entrance next to Pickleball Kingdom, near JCPenney.

Guests are encouraged to arrive before 11 a.m. to gather for Santa's arrival to make sure they don't miss his grand entrance with the Holyoke Fire Department. Santa Claus will be escorted to his village in Café Square by the Colby Academy of Dance, followed by a special holiday performance from the group.

The holiday festivities continue with free face painting and balloon twisting by Dazzle Day Face Painters.

Photos with Santa are available in Café Square immediately following his arrival until Christmas Eve. Babies, children, families, and even pets are invited and more details are available here. Reservations are strongly encouraged and can be made by visiting [whereis-santa.com](http://whereis-santa.com).

Along with Santa comes the start of the holiday shopping season, and Holyoke Mall is announcing special hours to ensure that guests can shop in-store at their convenience. The center will be closed on Thanksgiving, Thursday, Nov. 27, and re-open on Black Friday, Nov. 28 at 7 a.m. and will close at 9 a.m. Click here for a complete calendar of Holyoke Mall's holiday shopping hours scheduled for the 2025 season.

## Wistariahurst to hold open house, market

HOLYOKE – There's snow place like Wistariahurst during the holiday season! Wistariahurst's upcoming Holiday Open House and Festive market is perfect for those pineing for some holiday cheer, gifts from local businesses and artists, and family fun. The museum will be open Dec. 6 and 7 from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for this joyous event. The halls will be decked with the splendor of the holiday season, complete with our massive Wisty

Railroad train set running throughout Wistariahurst's gallery. Visitors will be able to explore the first floor of the museum, listen to holiday-themed music, and discover one-of-a-kind goodies from local vendors and artists. The festive market will feature a variety of products such as art, jewelry, and other amazing items perfect for your gift exchanges this year. Our Holiday Open House is guaranteed to bring joy to your world with historical fun and holiday cheer.

But that's not all. Guests can enjoy family friendly activities like a holiday storytime, family photos in our historic carriage, and get a holiday balloon animal. There's something for everyone to enjoy—snow-one will be left out of the fun.

Wistariahurst Museum's 5th Annual Holiday Open House and Festival Market truly offers something for everyone, and we're so excited to welcome the entire community to join us and share in the joy of the sea-

son. Our event is a time for celebration and a time to make cherished memories, so we've made sure to make admission to this event free and open to the public. Don't forget to join us at this event on Dec. 6 and 7 from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at Wistariahurst Museum! It's the most wonderful time of the year.

This event is sponsored in part by the Adams Foundation of South Hadley, Bank ESB, Duryea Electric, and Holyoke Gas and Electric.

## Plow contractors wanted

HOLYOKE – With winter nearing, the Department of Public Works is seeking individuals to assist city plow operators in the 2025-2026

winter season. Qualified individuals with the proper equipment are encouraged to apply in person at: DPW, 63 Canal Street, Holyoke

## Wreaths Across America event at Veterans Cemetery

AGAWAM – On Saturday, Dec. 13 at 10 a.m., the Friends of the Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Agawam will join Wreaths Across America in our annual mission to Remember, Honor, and Teach.

Together, we will lay Remembrance wreaths on the graves of our nation's heroes at the Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemetery, located at 1390 Main Street, Agawam, MA.

Parking and Shuttle Information:

Parking will be available at Six Flags New England, with shuttles running to the cemetery beginning at 8 a.m. Please plan to arrive early to allow for

shuttle transport and seating before the ceremony begins.

The Friends of the Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Agawam is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to honoring those who have served, comforting their families, and enhancing the beauty and dignity of this eternal resting place.

By sponsoring a wreath through the Friends, you help ensure that every veteran resting at the cemetery is remembered with a wreath of honor and gratitude.

For more information or to sponsor a wreath, please visit our website at [agawamfriends.org](http://agawamfriends.org) or email us at [wreathfriends@gmail.com](mailto:wreathfriends@gmail.com).

## Comedy show to raise funds for toy drive

CHICOPEE – The 13th Annual Western Mass. Toy Drive will be held on Wednesday, Dec. 10 at the Portuguese Club in Chicopee with "A Night of Comedy." Join host Jess Miller for three performances. Featured will be Dave Sheehan, Doreen Watson, and Max Dolchelli. Tickets are \$40 and includes dinner, pictures with Santa and Mrs. Claus as well as the comedy show. Reserve your seat now at [funnyraising.com](http://funnyraising.com).

## Hibernians hosting clothing and food drive for Providence Ministries

HOLYOKE – The Ancient Order of Hibernians of Hampden/Hampshire Counties along with the Polish National Credit Union Announce the Annual Clothing and Food Drive for Providence Ministries from September to Dec. 1.

Please drop off gently used clothing, blankets, sleeping bags, and/or non-perishable food

items to the Polish National Credit Union 270 Westfield Rd. Holyoke. Make a donation and be entered to win a raffle basket.

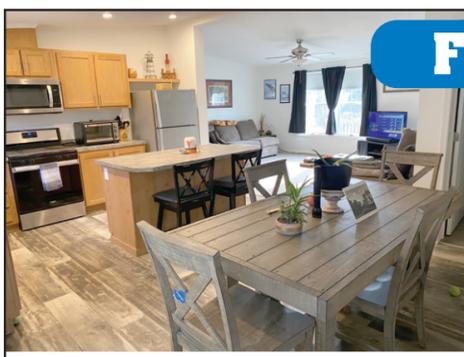
Please help those who are experiencing food insecurity and assist Providence Ministries as they continue to transform lives through their life-changing programs. Stop by the PNCU—your efforts will be greatly appreciated.

## Granby to host a stuff-a-cruiser

GRANBY – The Granby Police and Fire Associations invite the public to help stuff a cruiser with toys. Please bring new, in-box, unopened, unwrapped toys to place in a cruiser that will be gifted to children in need. The event will take place on Saturday, Dec. 6, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

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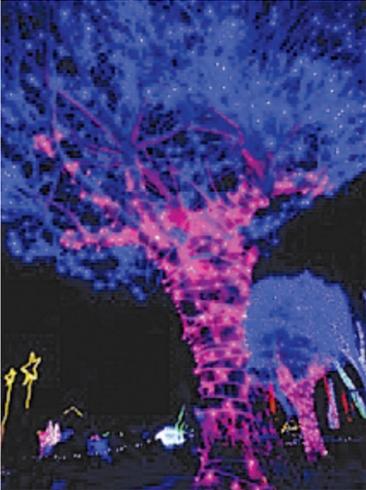
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Guest Column



## If we both collect Social Security, will our benefits be affected?

Dear Rusty:

I reached full retirement age back in June, but I have not yet filed to collect Social Security. My husband currently collects SS funds, and he waited until he had reached full retirement age a few years ago. I am considering signing up now to receive my funds, but I am a little confused about whether I will receive my full benefit or is there some kind of adjustment made based on both of us collecting?

We are a simple case. We have been married for 46 years, so there are no other exes involved in this equation. He did everything online when he was ready to start receiving his funds, but we didn't consult with any advisor when my husband claimed. Now I think that adding me as a spouse might trigger some other things I should consider. Thank you for your advice.

Signed: Concerned Wife

Dear Concerned:

Since you and your husband have both reached your respective SS Full Retirement Age, you are both entitled to receive your full benefits without any reduction. And since you haven't yet filed, you are now accumulating Delayed Retirement Credits at the rate of .667% additional benefit for each month you continue to delay. You will get your full SS retirement benefit plus any earned DRCs when you claim. The only question you need to consider is whether either you or your husband will be entitled to a "spousal boost," an increase when you claim.

If the SS retirement benefit you were entitled to at your FRA is less than 50% the amount your husband was entitled to at his FRA, then you will get a "spousal boost" on top of your own SS retirement amount (the "boost" amount would be the difference between your FRA amount and half of his FRA amount). But if your SS amount at your FRA is more than 50% of your husband's FRA entitlement, then you will

only get your own SS retirement benefit based on your own lifetime earnings record. Spouse benefits are always determined from each partner's FRA entitlement and if one partner's FRA amount is less than 50% of the other partner's FRA amount, then a spousal boost will be given. And that also works if your FRA entitlement is higher than your husband's, if your FRA amount is more than twice your husband's FRA amount, then he will get a spousal boost from you. Otherwise, each of you will get only your personally earned SS retirement amount and both of you collecting SS will not negatively affect each other's individual SS benefit.

FYI, the spousal boost amount stops growing at full retirement age, so if you are eligible for a spousal boost from your husband then you should claim your SS benefits now and ask for benefits retroactive to June (your FRA month). However, if you will not get a spousal boost from your husband, you have the option of delaying even further and earning more DRCs (thus a higher monthly benefit). You can earn DRCs up to age 70, at which time you will get the maximum possible Social Security benefit about 127% of your personal FRA amount if you delay that long.

*The Association Mature Citizens Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. This article is intended for information purposes and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the Association Mature Citizens Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association. To submit a question, visit [amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory](http://amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at [ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org](mailto:ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org). Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.*

# THANKS for GIVING



DAVE GRANLUND © www.davegranlund.com

Guest Column

## Thanksgiving nostalgia and planning ahead for next year's gratefulness

The arrival of Thanksgiving always gets me a little nostalgic.

Gone are the days of sneaking into the kitchen with my sister for a little bit of the crispy dressing from the stuffed turkey still in our parent's oven. Or how about awakening to the wonderful scents the morning of, knowing mom had been up at 4 a.m. getting the bird prepared.

It was always so much fun to butter the brown and serve rolls and then transfer them from the oven to the pre-heated trivet in their little wooden basket. I can smell the smells if I think about it long enough, and surely I can see my dad at the counter with the carving knife in hand.

Another big tradition was the nut bowl and the nut cracker and tools. We only ate nuts at Thanksgiving, and at Christmas to a lesser extent. I remember the Brazil nuts and walnuts being especially hard to crack with my little hands, but the challenge was half the fun.

These memories from my childhood are replaced with new traditions that my kids will call their own memories when they are my age. I guess the important thing is that we are thankful on this day whether it is for the memories, the people or the food or all of it. Gratitude goes a long way.

This Thanksgiving I am especially thankful for the bountiful harvest from this year's vegetable garden. The old motto goes something like: "you get out what you put in."

This year I sure put in a lot of effort in hopes of that harvest. When rain stopped

ple, but you get the idea. Streamlining is practical.

If you want to try growing new things, maybe Brussels sprouts like I wrote about last week, or sweet potatoes, like I experimented with this past summer, take some time over the offseason to look up the particulars so that you will be successful.

I did a show and tell with some students recently and it was a lot of fun to show them some out of the ordinary things that can be grown at home, like popcorn and luffa sponges for example. Get creative.

Maybe what will inspire you is getting something right, doing a better job growing a certain crop.

Did your zucchini look like baseball bats? Don't worry, next year you'll harvest sooner and more often. Same thing goes for those blimpy cukes. And what about those carrots? Next year you'll loosen up your soil and remove some rocks from the carrot patch so that they won't all fork. Straight, long roots here we come.

Wishing you all a Happy Thanksgiving! Have fun when the planning stage begins for next year's garden. It is, after all, just about six months away from our frost-free date.

Now that is something to be thankful for!

*Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 33 years she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to [pouimette@turley.com](mailto:pouimette@turley.com) with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.*



by Roberta McQuaid



the HOLYOKE Sun

TEAM



EDITOR/SPORTS  
Greg Scibelli  
[thesun@turley.com](mailto:thesun@turley.com)



ADVERTISING SALES  
Wendy Delcamp  
[wdelcamp@turley.com](mailto:wdelcamp@turley.com)

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We reserve the right to edit or withhold any submissions. Libelous, unsubstantiated allegations, personal attacks or defamations of character are not allowed.

Deadline for submissions is Wednesday at noon.

Please email (preferred) letters to [thesun@turley.com](mailto:thesun@turley.com). Mailed letters can be sent to *The Sun*, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069.

## The Holyoke Sun welcomes election letters to the editor

The Holyoke Sun welcomes readers to participate in this year's election campaigns by writing letters to the editor for publication on these pages. Letters of up to 250 words from local residents endorsing candidates on the ballot or discussing campaign issues should be sent to *The Holyoke Sun*, care of Turley Publications, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069, faxed to 413-289-1977 or emailed to [thesun@turley.com](mailto:thesun@turley.com). Please include a daytime telephone number for verification purposes (it will not be printed). Letters must be received by noon Monday to be considered for that Friday's

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For more information, call 413-283-8393.

### Campaign news

As part of its election coverage, the newspa-

per plans to print stories about contested races for Congress, state Senate, state House, district attorney and Governor's Council during the weeks leading up to the election, as well as a question-and-answer voters guide. In order to ensure fairness to all candidates, no political press releases will be printed, nor will reporters cover political rallies or fundraisers.

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POETRY CORNER

# Thanksgiving Day Wedding

A fasting hour by the open-doored day;  
To where? – runs a rushing rill...  
A reminder suddenly – of larger things;  
Of a wedding down the hill.

And a mile or so away, where they are:  
At the mid-region of a glen;  
And, if to leave right away –  
They might be waiting then.

For sixteen years I've known the bride;  
Nearly as long – the groom:  
Ten thousand years each has known,  
The other, when the ice made room.

Rains that we have had, and now;  
Warm sun, reduce further the snow;  
With all amelt everywhere  
Friends of the party will go.

A vermilion-red cape is drawn around,  
In fullness for safety as for ceremony;  
And follow tracks through green-shadowed woods,  
But no others have arrived I see...

Except the bride, over rocks and stone;  
And a swollen, hurtling, headlong groom;  
They both had taken separate ways;  
From different parts of town.

Another I wish could be in their presence;  
And this place where a bridge had spanned,  
The quiet waters where they meet –  
And notice in their midst some rounded band.

The bridge itself in a springtime bloom –  
From courtship, to marriage, was crossed years ago;  
Until lately when one of them crossing went lightly  
Where the other shall have occasion to go.

When ashes breathe upon the ashes;  
As every moving line will end,  
Except perhaps for those who live  
Like these in the deepened glen.

Some can recall the wooden structure,  
That went out nails and all in the flood;  
But those below who raised it up,  
Will last for its in their blood.

Just, as it seemed that someone,  
Would be celebrating at this hour;  
Another Thanksgiving on this shore,  
And in this hemlock bower...

Vintage snow can make a bitter cup,  
But what better have I here,  
When far away is Windham Village,  
For ale, or cider or beer?

Besides, store and post office, and the church  
Have ceased, – and few pastures open for wool;  
And if no longer joy takes place, who  
Will have the beauty of the bridal pool? –

Before turning, a fare-thee-well and fortune –  
In lifted hopes to the couple I say;  
Perhaps a time I'll come back,  
With a bride some summer day.

The pointed trees are completed by the stars;  
And a long uphill hunger it has seemed;  
And dinner - before off to bed  
To live again where I walked and dreamed.

– Charles Barnes

# Random Acts of Kindness: Spotlight on Marline Claremont



By Barb Turcotte

It was such a joy being introduced, then chatting with Marline Claremont. At first her sleeves were down but soon it got warmer and she pushed them up revealing several tattoos. She admitted she has over 30, each one having very significant meaning, they aren't just haphazard.

She has a rather diverse background. She worked as a truck driver for over 20 years, explaining in the trucking trade most had tattoos which is when she started getting hers. She explained what some of them meant to her, one in particular that I'll clarify later.

After leaving trucking, she did a stint as a real estate broker then moved on to owning her own mortgage brokerage. Soon after that she was offered a job by the President of a bank because he saw what an incredibly hard worker she was. Claremont then began her next career; banking. She worked for various banks in the area and wound up obtaining the position of the first Vice President of Retail Lending. With a laugh she explained that she always wore long sleeves for that professional look needed in the banking industry.

When I asked about random acts of kindness she'd done, she said she worked so much supporting herself and her family she never had time to volunteer. Then she explained how she would do things monetarily instead and always put charity in her budget. Rather than giving to a big named charity,

she prefers making a difference by giving to someone personally. Perhaps seeing someone buying groceries who's struggling so helps them with their bill. She explained how someone she'd heard about was having a financial difficulty, anonymously, she sent a money order to them for two-hundred dollars. She said she likes to do things quietly knowing she is helping an individual in their time of need.

We agreed, people somehow just cross another's paths whether it's you noticing they need help or sometimes it's like this, our meeting so I'm able to tell her story. She also was a foster mom to a young boy who is now thirty-two and is still very much in her life.

Now that Claremont is retired, she has time to volunteer and is dedicated to making a difference in honoring our local fallen veterans. She became involved with the 'Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Agawam' when she lost her son in July of 2022. He is one of her tattoos. He was a veteran of the Coast Guard and she is now the guardian of his child. This young person made the comment to Claremont, "I lost my

dad and that's hard but you lost your son". Quite a comment of maturity and understanding from such a young person.

In order to be on the board of Agawam Veteran's Council, which is a separate organization, you have to be a veteran. Not being a veteran herself, Claremont became a co-coordinator of 'Wreaths Across America' and is serving her second term in that role along with someone from the Veterans Council.

In 2024 a new organization was formed called Friends of the Agawam Veterans Council so non-military people could help and also hold an office. Claremont is on this board. Some of the things they do as "Friends" is cleaning the headstones and hope to help with a digital sign in the future.

One of the big things as president, Claremont is responsible for fundraising for 'Wreaths Across America'. On Dec. 13 they will be placing wreaths on each gravesite in the cemetery and I was truly surprised by the number of wreaths it would take to accomplish this mission. In order to do this, they need 10,800 wreaths, and that's just at the Agawam

Veteran's Cemetery. Each wreath costs \$17 which means they need a lot of help to accomplish this. Luckily, they do get money from business sponsors and citizen's donations but they still need help to reach their goal of 5,000 wreaths to be able to achieve this feat. To sponsor a wreath you can make a donation at: [www.wreathscrossamerica.org/MA0110P](http://www.wreathscrossamerica.org/MA0110P) and for more information on how to get involved with Friends of MA Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Agawam, the address is PO Box 03, Feeding Hills, MA 01030 or [www.agawamfriends.org](http://www.agawamfriends.org)

Another way you can help is getting involved with 'One Call Away', also located in Agawam. Their mission is to support veterans who suffer from PTSD and also help to prevent suicide. Their website is: [www.onecallawayfoundation.org](http://www.onecallawayfoundation.org) or call 413-301-6026, Local crisis 413-367-8738, National crisis is 988.

Thankfully we have people like Claremont who have this type of devotion and dedication willing to give of themselves. As you can see, it's not always monetary but instead a contribution of time and commitment. Thank you, Marline Claremont.

If you'd like to share a Random Act of Kindness story or if this one has touched you, please contact me at [bdt514@aol.com](mailto:bdt514@aol.com) or 413-575-9385. Who knows, you might see your story, 'Just 'Cause' you witnessed, you did or maybe received something nice being done for you. See you soon with another Random Act of Kindness.

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**CLUES ACROSS**

- Popular wine \_\_\_ Spumante
- Greatly impressed
- \_\_\_ and that
- Uttered with passion
- Boats
- Veteran actor Harris
- Casserole with game
- Reprehensible acts
- They precede C
- Says under one's breath
- Taxis
- It transfers genetic info
- NFL great Randy
- Where college students sleep
- Major European river
- Taco condiment
- frutti
- Polish city
- Astronomy unit

- Khoikhoi peoples
- Bears QB Williams
- Scrambled, fried, boiled
- Price indicators
- One-time world power
- When you hope to get somewhere
- Farm building
- Choose carefully
- Magnum was one
- One who combines
- Nursemaids
- Partner to Pa
- Notable river
- Officially honors
- Colorless compound
- A fancy chair
- Email function

**CLUES DOWN**

- The central area in a building

- Religion of Japan
- Leggings
- Officially distributes
- Arabian Sea seaport
- Spanish doctors
- It cools your house
- Currency of Poland
- Slowly moves into
- Days (Spanish)
- Unit of volume
- Emit
- With two replaceable hydrogens
- Title for a man
- Equally
- Scarlett's home
- One-time tech titan
- Subway dwellers
- One-tenth of a liter
- Central European river
- Distress signal
- Expression of sympathy
- The bill in a restaurant

- Football equipment
- Dance music
- Russian river
- Cosmetics giant Mary
- \_\_\_
- Gym class
- Automobiles
- Roman honorific
- Losses in sports
- Skin tone in summer
- Distant planet
- Critical humor
- Illegally obtained
- Go back over
- Home appliance brand
- Unit of radioactivity
- Home of the Flyers
- Short official note
- Emit coherent radiation
- Anno Domini (in the year of Our Lord)
- Most common noble gas (abbr.)
- Toward

CROSSWORD ANSWER on page 8

# In The News



Players in the drama worked their way through the crowd of diners while performing.



There was a full crowd on hand for the performance.

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli



The performance nears its conclusion as more characters are introduced.



A pair of performers look on at the action in the crowd.



QR codes were part of the audience participation in the play.



One of the players starts some crowd interaction.



The play was held on Nov. 13.

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## VOICE, from page 1

perfect," said Shaw. Alongside their regular meetings, VOICE brings in a guest speaker, and this month, Loving Hands and its faithful leaders, Marie Francis and Margie Bacon, who work to sew with love hats, scarves, and mittens, and create blessing bags for the homeless and veterans.

The pair pray and are blessed with donations as they believe in trusting in God to provide for them, as they have seen miracles happen left and right, a testimony of the power of faith, and a tight-knit community willing to help others in need.

The organization is in need of yarn, socks for both men and women, and mittens and gloves in order to put together the blessing bags they hand out to anyone in need.

"In the veterans sphere in western Mass, there is always something happening and we're always working and we want the veterans to know they aren't alone," said Shaw.

For people who work with a veteran-centered mission and services, they can connect on Facebook or through their Gmail, [voicewesternma@gmail.com](mailto:voicewesternma@gmail.com)



A collection of the local agencies a part of VOICE that help it reach as many veterans as possible.

Submitted photo

You can donate to veteran-centric food pantries which include The Barnes Air National Guard Wellness Center, Project New Hope at Hampden Pond Plaza in Westfield, Ludlow Veterans Services Center, and Belchertown Veterans Services Office.

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## MIAA makes calendar change to start of fall

**FRANKLIN** – The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association recently approved a couple of changes in their calendar, including codifying a practice that is already in place. The biggest change will be the start of the fall season for football preseason while two other changes were denied.

The Board of Directors voted to set the official start date of all fall sports, including football at two Mondays prior to Labor Day, beginning with the 2026-2027 school year. In recent years, football would begin the Friday prior to that Monday with the rest of the sports beginning two Mondays before Labor Day.

A proposal was denied to delay the start of winter preseason to the Tuesday following Thanksgiving. Right now, practices immediately begin on Monday after Thanksgiving. The proposal sought to give an administrative day for schools to prepare for the winter season.

Another proposal denied was for all postseason tournament brackets to be released exclusively on weekdays, with the exception of the football brackets, which are released on the Sunday after Week 8 games conclude.

The final accepted proposal was establishing a firm date for the end of all spring athletic seasons to be no later than the third Sunday in June, to coincide with the end of the academic year. It ensures that all postseason play and championship would take place on a consistent timeline each year. This is the current practice so no noticeable change will be seen on the current MIAA calendar.

## Holyoke's offense puts up 27 points, but not enough against West Side



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com  
Devin Velez attempts to escape the pack.



Georlee Aponte makes a catch.



Eloy Figueroa looks to avoid being tackled.

**WEST SPRINGFIELD** – In Week 10 on Nov. 14, Holyoke drew a match-up with another neighboring town. After defeating Chicopee in Week 9, the Knights went to West Springfield for their 10th game this year. Holyoke competed well, but ended up falling 49-27 as the defense just could not stop West Springfield's scoring attack. The Knights were 3-7 heading into their Thanksgiving Day tilt with South Hadley.



Lyshad Wilson takes the ball on a run.



Jesus Morales heads on the run.



Parker Brunelle gets a great block.



Calogeso Rosario eyes a shot.



Trent Leary attempts a layup.

## Knights hosts Unified event

**HOLYOKE** – Last Wednesday, Unified basketball season concluded with the season-ending jamboree event. Holyoke High School was one of the hosts of the event this year, which included multiple schools from the area. Look in next week's edition for more coverage of the jamboree event.



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com  
Yeyo Ruiz Mojica shoots.



Jayden Rivera sends a shot away.



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### Town of Worthington Highway Position Opening

The Town of Worthington is soliciting letters of interest from qualified candidates to fill two full-time Equipment Operator/General Laborer positions in the Town Highway Department.

Valid MA CDL operator, Hydraulic Hoister's licenses and OSHA-10 certification is preferred.

• salary rate range: \$26.49 - \$38.59 per hour

Further information can be found on the Town's website:

**www.worthington-ma.us**

Questions will be answered by the Highway Superintendent at 64 Huntington Road, Monday - Friday, 7 AM to 3 PM; the telephone number is 413-238-5830 or send letter of interest, resume and three (3) references with relevant contact information to: **highway@worthington-ma.us** or to **Worthington Highway Department, PO Box 643, Worthington, MA, 01098.** This posting will remain pertinent until the position is filled.

The Town of Worthington is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

### TOWN OF WORTHINGTON INVITATION TO BID SNOW PLOWING SERVICES

The Town of Worthington Highway Department is soliciting bids for seasonal plowing services for the 2025-2026 winter season. Work will include plowing backroads and selected blacktop sections throughout the Town of Worthington.

Minimum equipment requirements:  
• ¾-ton truck or larger  
• 8-foot plow (minimum)  
Please contact the Worthington Highway Department for bid specifications and route details:

**Worthington Highway Department 64 Huntington Road Worthington, MA 01098**

Phone: 413-238-5830 Email: **highway@worthington-ma.us**

The Town of Worthington reserves the right to accept or reject any and all bids deemed to be in the best interest of the Town.

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**QUAINT WEST BROOKFIELD BROOKHAVEN LAKE** by babbling brook, I-shaped 2bdm. ranch, 2/full baths, finished basement, walkout slider, enclosed front porch. Enjoy nature trails, very quiet private area. \$2850/monthly rental fee. Bernice Stone 774-262-6667.

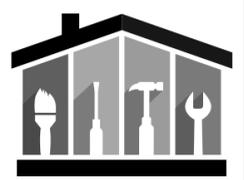
## FOR RENT



All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968, which makes it illegal to advertise any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status (number of children and or pregnancy), national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, or any intention to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination.

This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate that is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertising in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain about discrimination call The Department of Housing and Urban Development "HUD" toll-free at 1-800-669-9777. For the N.E. area, call HUD at 617-565-5308. The toll free number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275.

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CATEGORY:			
1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20
21	Base Price \$25.50	Base Price \$27.00	Base Price \$26.00
22	Base Price \$25.50	Base Price \$29.00	Base Price \$26.00
23	Base Price \$25.50	Base Price \$31.00	Base Price \$26.00
24	Base Price \$25.50	Base Price \$33.00	Base Price \$26.00
25	Base Price \$25.50	Base Price \$35.00	Base Price \$26.00
26	Base Price \$25.50	Base Price \$37.00	Base Price \$26.00
27	Base Price \$25.50	Base Price \$39.00	Base Price \$26.00
28	Base Price \$25.50	Base Price \$41.00	Base Price \$26.00
29	Base Price \$25.50	Base Price \$43.00	Base Price \$26.00
30	Base Price \$25.50	Base Price \$45.00	Base Price \$26.00
31	Base Price \$25.50	Base Price \$47.00	Base Price \$26.00
32	Base Price \$25.50	Base Price \$49.00	Base Price \$26.00
33	Base Price \$25.50	Base Price \$51.00	Base Price \$26.00
34	Base Price \$25.50	Base Price \$53.00	Base Price \$26.00
35	Base Price \$25.50	Base Price \$55.00	Base Price \$26.00
36	Base Price \$25.50	Base Price \$57.00	Base Price \$26.00
37	Base Price \$25.50	Base Price \$59.00	Base Price \$26.00
38	Base Price \$25.50	Base Price \$61.00	Base Price \$26.00
39	Base Price \$25.50	Base Price \$63.00	Base Price \$26.00
40	Base Price \$25.50	Base Price \$65.00	Base Price \$26.00

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Town: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number of Weeks: \_\_\_\_\_ X per week rate = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Credit Card:  MasterCard  VISA  Discover  Cash  Check# \_\_\_\_\_  
 Card #: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_ CVV \_\_\_\_\_  
 Amount of charge: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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298 Jarvis Avenue • Holyoke, MA 01040  
(Please use the "Sheldon" entrance.)

Enjoy lavish hors d'oeuvres and festive entertainment by Gary & Natalie Jones.  
Tours will be offered following the event.

**Kindly RSVP by Tuesday, November 25th to 413-561-7958.**

It's time to put your Life Plan in place.

Day Brook Village Senior Living is a locally owned, not-for-profit continuing care retirement community (CCRC) offering all levels of care. Residents have priority access to each level should their needs change, and couples remain together on campus even if their care needs differ.

Don't miss your chance to enjoy exceptional savings when you sign a lease at Day Brook Village before December 31st, 2025.\*

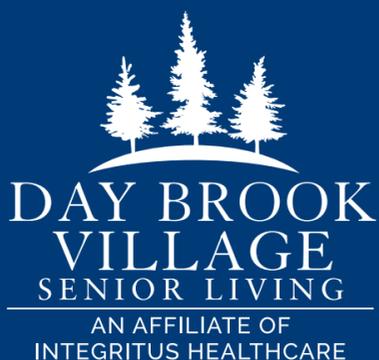
**SIGN BY NOV. 30 & ENJOY:**

- ✓ Two months rent-free
- ✓ Complimentary two-month meal plan, including breakfast AND lunch

**SIGN BY DEC. 31 & ENJOY:**

- ✓ One month rent-free
- ✓ Complimentary one-month meal plan, including breakfast AND lunch

\*Dinner is included in the Monthly Service Fee. Limited availability. Offer applies to new Independent Living depositors after October 1st, 2025. Monthly Service Fees range from \$2,682 - \$4,935.



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www.daybrookvillage.org



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