



# Town of Westford Massachusetts

## Town Manager's Newsletter

January 2023



**Jodi Ross,**  
Interim  
Town  
Manager

[jross@westfordma.gov](mailto:jross@westfordma.gov)  
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**Tuesday, January 24, 2PM**  
**Deadline for Petition**  
**Articles To Town Clerk's**  
**Office**

**Submission Deadline for**  
**Nomination Papers for**  
**town elected offices**  
**Tuesday, March 14, 5 PM**

**Saturday, March 25, 10AM**  
**Annual Town Meeting**  
**Westford Academy**



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community access television  
[www.westfordcat.org](http://www.westfordcat.org)

### Dear Westford residents,

Our Annual Town Meeting will be held on Saturday, March 25<sup>th</sup>, at 10:00 AM in the Westford Academy gymnasium. The deadline to submit citizen petition articles to the Town Clerk's Office for certification of signatures is Tuesday, January 24<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 PM. The Select Board will vote to close the Annual Town Meeting Warrant at their meeting that evening. To review the timeline, please visit the following link: [2023 Annual Town Meeting Timeline.](#)

Nomination papers for our local town elected offices are available at the Town Clerk's Office and the submission deadline is Tuesday, March 14<sup>th</sup>, at 5:00 PM. Our town election will be held on Tuesday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>.

At their meeting on January 10<sup>th</sup>, the Select Board discussed their preferences of conducting future Select Board meetings, whether in-person, hybrid, or virtually. The board discussed the pros and cons of each type of meeting. The Governor's Act Relative to Extending Certain State of Emergency Accommodations is set to expire on March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023. Without an extension or a new Act, virtual meetings may not be in compliance with the Open Meeting Laws. Select Board Chair, Andrea Peraner-Sweet informed me to plan for in-person Select Board meetings to resume on February 14<sup>th</sup>, with the board preferring to offer a hybrid option to attendees. Our staff will begin preparations to return to this format at least until the March 31<sup>st</sup> deadline.

At the same meeting, the board voted their intention to lay out Byrne Place as a public way, and refer the matter to the Planning Board for a non-binding recommendation.

The Select Board considered approving my recommendation to fund the Public Safety Radio Upgrade Project, which was approved at the 2022 Annual Town Meeting in the amount of \$1,040,000 with ARPA funds, which would free up \$126,880 per year for 10 years in the town's operating budget. The board voted unanimously to approve this request. The total ARPA funding approved to date is \$5,491,886.30, with the total amount of unspent funds remaining of \$1,926,084.54. All ARPA documents are available to view at the following link: [ARPA Funding.](#)

The Select Board approved the recommendations from the opioid spending task force regarding spending of National Opioid Litigation Settlement payments which have been received in the amount of \$129,997.88. This will be presented to Town Meeting for approval in March. Their recommendation included supporting a multi-disciplinary financial fund focused on harm reduction, reducing barriers to treatment, supporting substance use prevention, and promotion of mental health initiatives in Westford.

The board approved forming a Community Behavioral and Mental Health Committee (CBMHC) and have charged the group with the following:

- Review the Westford mental and behavioral health data, provided by the Community Wellness and Health Departments. Review existing mental and behavioral health resources, programming, and services for all residents.

(Continued on next page)

[WWW.WESTFORDMA.GOV](http://WWW.WESTFORDMA.GOV)

- Advise the Select Board, Board of Health and other town departments how to improve awareness, recommend programs, resources, and tools focusing both on prevention and intervention, include specific items with budgetary estimates, and suggested timelines for implementation.
- Advocate for substance use disorder and mental health services which promote prevention, treatment, and recovery for diverse populations.

The Committee composition will include: a Select Board member, Board of Health member, Police Department representative, Fire Department representative, Town Social Worker, Westford Public Schools representative, Nashoba Valley Technical High School representative, Health Director, Community Wellness Coordinator, Regional Community Wellness Coordinator, Community Faith leader, and four Citizens-at-Large. If you are interested in serving on this new committee, please complete a Citizen's Activity form at following link: [Citizen Activity Form](#).

A request from David Hedison, Executive Director of C.H.O.I.C.E., Inc., was approved by the board which sought support for a Community Preservation Funding Application for an additional \$1 million for the 35 Town Farm Redevelopment and Food Pantry project. To find out more information and the latest update on the project, you may visit the following link: [David Hedison Memo Regarding Support for CPA Application](#).

Westford was awarded a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) program Action Grant to conduct a Tree and Invasive Species Inventory and Management Plan with a related Tree Planting Plan. As part of this process, the Second Public Forum will be conducted virtually on Thursday, January 19<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00 PM to review the draft Plan and to seek additional public input. For more information, you may visit the following link: [Tree and Invasive Species Inventory and Management Plan](#).

At the Select Board's December 27<sup>th</sup> meeting, the board voted to approve a contract with Kristen Las, Westford's new Town Manager. Kristen will begin on January 31<sup>st</sup>. Please join me in welcoming Kristen to our town. At the same meeting, the board voted to appoint me as Acting Town Manager from January 4<sup>th</sup> through the 31<sup>st</sup>.

Please join me in welcoming Kyle Fox, our new Assistant Public Works Director. Kyle comes to us with years of related experience in Merrimack, New Hampshire.

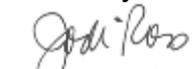
The Select Board recognized Paul MacMillan for approximately 12 years of service in Westford as a member of the Zoning Board of Appeals. Thank you Paul, for your commitment and dedication to Westford!

There are several openings on our local boards and committees, including: 35 Town Farm Road Task Force, Affordable Housing Trust, Agricultural Commission, Board of Cemetery Commissioners, Bylaw Review Committee, Capital Planning Committee, Commission on Disability, Community Behavioral Health Committee, Cultural Council, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, Dog Park Task Force, Economic Development Committee, Election Officer, Healthy Westford Committee, Housing Authority, Parks and Recreation Commission, Pedestrian Safety Committee, Permanent Town Building Committee, Scholarship and Grant Committee, Senior Low Income Disabled Tax Relief Committee, Tax Possession Sale Committee, Town and School Safety Task Force, and Zoning Board of Appeals. I urge you to peruse our website for information about the work of these committees; and if you have interest, please complete and submit a Citizen's Activity form at this link: [Citizen Activity Form](#).

Would you like more detailed information on the Select Board's meetings? Click the following links to access: [Select Board Documents](#) & [Select Board Meeting Videos](#).

Happy New Year! Stay warm everyone.

Sincerely,



Jodi Ross



*Kyle Fox,  
Assistant Public  
Works Director*

## **From The Moderator**

It's that time again! **Annual Town Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, March 25, 2023 starting at 10:00 AM at Westford Academy.** This is your opportunity to render opinions, ask questions and vote on our Town budget and other important issues and expenditures. Every town resident who is registered to vote on or before March 15, 2023 can attend, speak and vote at Town Meeting. Need to register? Contact the Town Clerk's office.

The voters at Town Meeting constitute the legislative body of our Town, deciding on budgets, by-laws and Citizen's Petitions. This is your opportunity to learn what makes Westford tick and vote on how our community is run. Here are some resources if you'd like more information about the Town Meeting process:

[League of Women Voters Guide to Town Meeting](#)

[Town Meeting Explained](#)

<https://www.sec.state.ma.us/cis/cistwn/twnidx.htm>

Keep an eye on the [Town Moderator's page](#) at the Town of Westford website for more details about the Articles we will be voting on as they become available. There will be plenty of parking at Westford Academy on the day of the meeting and we will have Mentors available throughout the meeting to answer your questions off line. We are focused on efficiency and I hope to wrap up as early in the day as possible. Come for all or part of the meeting and share in the governance of our community.

**DEMOCRACY WORKS BEST WHEN THE  
GREATEST NUMBER OF PEOPLE PARTICIPATE!**

[www.westfordma.gov/moderator](http://www.westfordma.gov/moderator)

## Town Clerk's Corner

The **2023 Census** will be in your mailboxes this month. Please take a moment to complete and return this important document. The only way to ascertain the current population for grant awards, state funding and school children is through the census.

**Dog licenses** for 2023 are now available. A current rabies certificate and appropriate fee are all you need to license your dog for the calendar year. Please remember that the grace period for licensing your dog ends on March 31<sup>st</sup> of every year. Avoid the \$25 late fee and license your dog today.

The deadline to submit a [petition articles](#) to the Town Clerk's Office for inclusion on the Annual Town Meeting warrant is **Tuesday, January 24, 2023 at 2:00 pm**. Refer to [A Guide to Town Meeting in Westford](#).

**Annual Town Meeting:** Saturday, March 25, 2023 at 10:00 AM, Westford Academy  
**Annual Town Election:** Tuesday, May 2, 2023



### OPEN POSITIONS FOR LOCAL OFFICE IN 2023

The table below lists open seats for the May 2, 2023 Town Election. Nomination papers are now available at the Town Clerk's Office for those who are interested in running for office. The deadline to file nomination papers bearing the signatures of at least 50 Westford voters is Tuesday, March 14, 2023. 5:00pm.

Office	# positions	Terms expiring for:	Length of term
Select Board	2	G. Thomas Clay Anita Tonakarn-Nguyen	3 years
Board of Health	2	Zac Cataldo Michele Pitoniak-Crawford	3 years
Housing Authority	1	To fill an unexpired term	2 years
Library Trustees	2	Lynn Clermont Robert Price	3 years
Planning Board	1	Darrin Wizst	5 years
Moderator	1	Angela Harkness	3 years
School Committee	2	Gloria Miller Valery Young	3 years

## WESTFORD RECREATION

### Westford Partnership for Children Recreation's After School Program

The WPC program provides a safe, stimulating, and fun environment for school children grades K-5.

WPC program offers:

- Choice of activities
- Flexible schedules
- Safe and easy transition from classroom to program
- And experienced Site Directors and staff

WPC runs Monday-Friday, school dismissal to 5:45 p.m., with locations at Abbot, Crisafulli, Day, Miller, Nabnasset, and Robinson.

Register for any session, at any time.

Learn more at [About WPC - westfordrec.com](http://About WPC - westfordrec.com).

### Westford Recreation Special Programs COMING SOON – FEBRUARY BREAK!

February 21-24, for Grades K-8

Recreation Special Programs provides support for parents and children with special full-day and full-week programs during school professional development days, parent conferences, and December, February, and April school vacations. Each program is full of events that are educational, inspiring, and fun!

Learn more at [Special Programs - westfordrec.com](http://Special Programs - westfordrec.com).

### Westford Recreation Highlight Nitehawks Track and Field - Winter Season

Learn and practice with this well trained and certified coaching staff. The program runs mid-January through March 1 for grades K-3 and 4-8. *Options for late enrollment!*

Learn more at [Nitehawks - westfordrec.com](http://Nitehawks - westfordrec.com).



Recreation Director Michelle Collett with WPC After School participant Jocelyn Kinkade.

#### Top to Bottom:

Pic 1 and 2: Designing planes and preparing for lift off, with WPC Counselor Teddy Nordhougen. WPC After School program – Day.

Pic 3 and 4: December Break Special Program at XtremeCraze. Fun-for-all! (That's WPC Counselor Timmy Read in Pic 4.)

## Sustainability – Sue Thomas, [Sustainability Coordinator](#), 978-399-2798

### 2023 Climate Resolutions: Easy to make and affordable to keep

Climate news is everywhere this year. And overwhelming. However, while extreme weather events interrupted holiday celebrations across the continent and the globe, the Federal Government continued to roll out programs and financial assistance to citizens, municipalities, landlords and business owners for reducing emissions, and the incoming Healey Administration buttressed recent state legislation and funding for the same array of constituents with an Executive Order creating a new Climate Chief for Massachusetts. How does this impact you? It means whatever your circumstance, there is a climate resolution you can keep. These steps make Federal and State dollars available to help you lower your carbon footprint and protect the town and the people you love in the form of free equipment, rebates and tax credits, to:

- Make your home more energy efficient, just as energy prices are increasing
- Electrify your home and install clean energy
- Add battery storage
- Purchase a new appliance
- Buy an electric car.

See [Mass Save](#), [Energy.gov](#), [the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center](#), the [Green Energy Consumers Alliance](#), and the [IRS](#) for more information. Incentives and tax credits are usually “stackable” meaning you can claim them all, and generally people are eligible for greater discounts in lower income brackets, as the most recent legislation at both the federal and state levels puts a priority on equity. Don't be shy about checking into these resources!

### How is Westford helping you?

- [Westford's Climate Roadmap](#) outlines municipal, residential and business goals
- Grant funded part time Sustainability Coordinator charged with coordinating the implementation of the Climate Roadmap and helping everyone in town capture this money to make positive changes. Come meet me at the [Cameron Senior Center](#) in January and February!
- Group purchasing of electricity and municipal net metering agreements. If you are not already part of [Westford Pop](#), sign up! Opt Up to higher levels of renewables if you can. Perhaps this is your New Year's commitment?
- Sustainable Building Standards
- Curbside trash and recycling removal and [resources to recycle everything else](#)
- [Education in composting](#), Earth Machines and the [Litter League](#)
- Participation in the [Green Communities Program](#), resulting in grant funded improvements to municipal facilities and fleets and a more resilient building code
- Participation in the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program. [Come to the Public Forum on January 19<sup>th</sup> to learn about the Tree and Invasive Species Inventory and Management Plan](#)
- The Westford Public Schools have made sustainability and the Westford Climate Roadmap a priority, adopting a new sustainability policy on top of the town wide Buy Recycled policy and incorporating Sustainability into the District Wide Plan
- Conservation Planning to protect the character and resilience of the town.
- The [Water Department](#) (plan to buy a rain barrel this spring!) and the [Health Department](#) have outstanding education initiatives on water quality.
- Our Public Safety officials (DPW, Police, Fire, Ambulance, Merrimack Valley Medical Reserve Corps, shelters) are all prepared to help during extreme weather events.
- While it is not possible to mention every effort, department and committee that is hard at work in this space in one newsletter, all of town government is committed to protecting your health, the health of the town and of the planet as we address changes in the years ahead.

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## Sustainability (continued)

### What will you resolve to do this year?

- Make a plan using the resources above to select energy and money saving tasks that work for you.
- Call MassSave to make a plan for you based on a free energy audit. Did you know energy audits can be redone every three years?
- If this year, you hope to reach out and learn more, consider how you might volunteer for a town committee or an advocacy organization like [Westford Climate Action](#).
- If money and time are tight, even with these resources and supports, traditional conservation values can underpin your resolution to help the planet and yourself. Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle is the new motto and it works for almost any decision you may make.
  - Refuse it – distinguish between needs and wants and choose the lower emission option.
  - Reduce – If you can't or won't refuse an item, take or buy less of it. Consider items with recycled content and limit plastic when possible, including in clothing.
  - Reuse – before you buy, consider if you have something you can repurpose rather than purchase, and before you toss, if that item has more life, or a possible second one, give or donate it to someone who will use it
  - Recycle – Buy things that recycle or compost at the end of their lives and then do so when their utility has been exhausted. Aim for zero waste, meaning no trash, and see how low you can go!
  - This thought process can make a big difference when it comes to big problems for the environment, your budget, and town trash costs, as well as our global climate footprint. One important example is to apply this thinking to food waste:
    - Refuse: Limit or eliminate items that are high on the food chain, use a tremendous amount of water to grow, are out of season, or come from far away. Buy local to encourage sustainable local food production. You may be surprised at how satisfying a blend of substitutes and small portions can be.
    - Reduce: Buy only what you will use. Measure your current food waste. Most people are shocked to realize how much food they throw away. Make a list before you shop to avoid duplication and multiple trips to the store.
    - Reuse: Make a soup or a sauce or a casserole or a stock with your leftovers or older produce. Freeze items for later.
    - Compost! You don't have to be a chemist or a gardener to make great topsoil for your lawn or garden.

Other examples of areas to start thinking about Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle include paper and plastic goods, but really any area of purchasing and consumption might benefit from a second look using this mindset. Consider doing a trash audit one week and use it to guide your changes. Limit yourself to one thing at a time and give yourself time (3 months at least) to build the new habit. Once you have made the switch, you will wonder what took you so long!

Take advantage of all these people and dollars working for you. Make a plan and work it to keep a climate resolution in 2023!

## January at the J.V. Fletcher Library



Unless otherwise noted, the following programs are made possible by the Friends of the Library.

**Director's Corner:** Library Sunday Hours return in 2023 beginning on January 8! The Library will be open on Sundays from 2-5pm, through April 30, 2023 – with the exception of April 9 (Easter). The Library will be closed on Monday, January 16 in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

**Winter Story Times** – we offer a variety of small group (under 25 kids) story times for children this winter that take place in the Meeting Room. To accommodate a wider variety of participants there will be no registrations or reservations. Plan to arrive early, before the start of the story time. Go to the Meeting Room and ask for a Story time ticket for each child to claim your spots in the story time. Your options for story time are ABC and Me for kids ages 2 to 4 on Tuesdays at 10:30 to 11:00 a.m.; ABC and Me for kids ages 3 to 5 on Tuesdays at 1:15 to 1:45 p.m.; and Wiggle Words for ages 2 to 4 on Wednesdays at 10:30 to 11:00 a.m. [Please visit our website and Events calendar for more information.](#)

Winter also means the restart of Mother Goose, and early literacy interactive story time that is offered every Monday and Thursday at 10:30 a.m. **Mother Goose will resume on Monday, February 6.** Children and their caregivers join us in the Meeting Room for this drop in program.

**Exam Week Study Hours: Tuesday, January 17, Wednesday, January 18 and Thursday, January 19 from 2:00 to 10:00 pm and Monday, January 23 from 2:00 to 9:00 p.m.** Drop in to the Meeting Room during Exam Week to get together and study! Free pizza will be provided each night at 6:00 p.m. Free snacks, beverages, and coffee will be provided every day. Students must have a ride home promptly at closing time. EXAM WEEK is made possible by the Friends of the J. V. Fletcher Library and a Generous Gift from Darryl and Ann Greenwood.

**VIRTUAL JOB SEARCH HELP FOR 50 & OVER – JOB SEARCH HELP FOR 50 & OVER – Create Your "Career Story" Pitch:** Wed., Jan 18, 9:30a.m to 11:30a.m.. The Massachusetts Library Collaborative's 50+ Job Seekers Group meets on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month, from 9:30am to 11:30am and 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays of the month from 6pm to 8pm, via Zoom. If you are unemployed and actively looking, underemployed, seeking a new career direction, re-entering the job market after a long employment gap, or recently retired and looking for your "Encore Career", this networking group program is perfect for you! [Register here.](#)

**If you Give a Mouse a Cookie story time with Strega Mama: Wednesday, January 18 at 10:30 a.m.** While we are preparing for the return of our winter/spring story times, try this special story time featuring performer Strega Mama and her version of the beloved Laura Numeroff story. Enjoy a story and songs, games, learn some new sign language, and feed the cookie monster! This free, drop-in program is best for ages three and up.

**Virtual James Herriot: Life of the World's Most Famous Veterinarian: Wednesday, January 25 at 7:00 p.m.** Join Anglophile Claire Evans in this Zoom webinar as she recounts the life and times of Alf Wight, an unassuming country veterinarian who practiced for 50 years in the Yorkshire Dales. Alf Wight rose to international fame later in life under the pen name James Herriot as he recounted the heartwarming animal stories and colorful characters of a bygone era, inspiring a film and multiple television series. Of the latest TV adaptation of "All Creatures Great and Small," shown on PBS' Masterpiece, The Guardian said, "Switching it on was the television equivalent of taking your brain out and dunking it into a bucket of warm tea (Yorkshire, obviously)." Bask in the visual beauty of Claire's recent Yorkshire Dales visit and learn the surprising story of the vet whose books still entertain millions. [Register here.](#)

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## January at the J.V. Fletcher Library (Continued)

**Open Gameplay with One Up Games: Thursday, January 26, from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m.** Come to the Meeting Room for an afternoon of video games and virtual reality! The crew from One Up Games will bring an Xbox, Switch, Playstation, and Oculus Quest with a wide variety of game choices. For Grade 6 and up. [Registration required.](#)

**Pajama Story Time: Mon., January 30 at 6:30 p.m.** Pajama Time meets once a month on a Monday evening in the Meeting Room for children ages 3 to 7. Get into those pajamas and grab a favorite stuffed animal or blanket and come on in!

**Friends of the Library e-newsletter:** The best way to learn about our upcoming programs and new services is through the FOL weekly e-newsletter. [Sign up here.](#)

Check out our [Museum Passes page](#) or call the Library for reservations. Unless otherwise noted, our museum passes are generously funded by the Friends of the Library. [Have you joined the Friends yet?](#)

### Quick Links to Our Most Popular Services!

[Programs – Adults](#)

[Programs – Kids](#)

[Programs – Young Adults](#)

If you have questions or need assistance, please call us at 978-399-2300 or send us an email at [westfordlibrary@westfordma.gov](mailto:westfordlibrary@westfordma.gov).

## Friends of East Boston Camps

The Westford Friends of East Boston Camps would like to Thank Chris Coutu for designing and printing this beautiful new map of the trails at Stony Brook Conservation Area. The map was laminated and then installed by Rose O'Donnell and Leslie Thomas to give the Kiosk a fresh look for the new year!

The EBC Friends have also installed holders at the Kiosks to make the new tri-fold map available.



## Cameron Senior Center

# Cameron looks forward to 2023! Engagement and event happenings for Seniors:

### COME ONE! COME ALL! MEET THE MUSIC MAKERS

**Friday, January 27 at 12:30pm**

We will have music, trivia, and lunch! We hope that you can attend. We will look forward to seeing you. If you enjoy making music with others and can carry a tune, drop in on Fridays at 9:00a.m. and try it. Sign up at 978.692.5523.

### BINGO FRIDAY LUNCHES

If you're interested in having lunch before BINGO, register for any or all of the following lunches prepared by BINGO chef Mike Dyer. Lunch is served beginning at 12:00

- **Friday January 20<sup>th</sup>** at 12pm Pasta
- **Friday February 3<sup>rd</sup>** at 12pm Hot Dogs & Hamburgers
- **Friday February 17<sup>th</sup>** at 12pm English Muffin Pizza

Pre-BINGO lunch is \$3. You must RSVP for lunch by calling 978.692.5523. For any questions about BINGO call your program coordinator, Katie Russell at 978.399.2330.

Special thanks to the Friends of the Cameron for their financial sponsorship of this event

### OUTREACH

With winter upon us we ask that you look out for senior neighbors. If you have any concerns about an elder, please don't hesitate to contact social services. If you are struggling with heating bills and your household income for one is below \$42,411 you may be eligible for fuel assistance. Even though it's cold out, try not to isolate and join us for enjoyable programs; there are lots to choose from. Keep warm and keep connected. To contact the Outreach department, call 978.399.2326.

### VALENTINE LUNCHEON

**Friday, February 10, 12pm**

Please join us for the sixth annual Valentine Luncheon With Musical Performance By Matt York. Bring your sweetheart, spouse, best friend, or anyone who makes you smile! As in past years, this event will be held at Fellowship Hall at First Parish Church, 48 Main St.

The festive menu will include apple and feta cheese salad, stuffed green peppers, and rolls prepared by the Elegant Chef program at Nashoba Valley Technical High School and chocolate specialty dessert made by Rivercourt Residences.

Event Sponsors: Friends of the Cameron Senior Center, Rivercourt Residences, Alcorn & Owens, PLLC, Westford Rotary Club.

A special thank you to Westford Cultural Council, a local agency, which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council for providing the musical performance of Matt York, Johnny Cash Songs and Stories. RSVP early to 978.692.5523. Cost for Friends Members is \$7; others are \$12.

To learn more about the Cameron Senior Center programs and services please visit:

[www.westfordma.gov/coa](http://www.westfordma.gov/coa), [www.facebook.com/Cameron Senior Center/](https://www.facebook.com/Cameron-Senior-Center/)  
[www.youtube.com/channel/UCaNqAZb3tw8EYYQ5bEe7XXg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCaNqAZb3tw8EYYQ5bEe7XXg) or simply call 978-692-5523.



To view the complete Council On Aging Newsletter please visit our website:  
[www.westfordma.gov/coa](http://www.westfordma.gov/coa) and click on [Newsletters](#).

# Community Wellness



Community Teamwork, Inc. is the Community Action Agency that provides needed services to the Greater Lowell region. Our communities of service include Lowell, Billerica, Chelmsford, Dracut, Dunstable, Tewksbury, Tyngsboro, and Westford. Every three years, Community Teamwork surveys our community residents to learn about community issues, including housing, employment, etc. Please help us by responding to our current Community Needs Survey and provide us your thoughts. These surveys support the Agency applying for and receiving additional financial supports for residents from federal, state, and private sources. Please check out the available resources at: [www.commteam.org](http://www.commteam.org)

**Please visit the links below to respond to our community needs assessment survey.**

[Community Needs Survey: Help us understand our community!](#)

[Encuesta de las necesidades de la comunidad: Ayúdenos a entender nuestra comunidad!](#)

[ការស្ទង់មតិអំពីតម្រូវការសហគមន៍: ជួយយើងឱ្យយល់អំពីសហគមន៍របស់យើង។](#)

[Pesquisa das Necessidades da Comunidade – Ajude-nos a entender a sua comunidade!](#)

[استبيان الاحتياجات المجتمعية: ساعدنا على فهم مجتمعنا.](#)

COMMUNITY TEAMWORK  
 155 Merrimack Street  
 Lowell MA 01852  
 978.459.0551  
[headquarters@commteam.org](mailto:headquarters@commteam.org)  
[www.commteam.org](http://www.commteam.org)

*Community Teamwork is a catalyst for social change. We leverage our programs, our partnerships, and our collective voice to foster equity, compassion, and community engagement to create housing, education and economic opportunities.*

Community Wellness (Continued)

*Are you experiencing the challenges of parenting  
a child who may be struggling with their  
mental health?*

*Please join us for one (or all) of our monthly  
Parent Support sessions where we will:*

 *Suggest coping skills for YOU,*

 *Share resources,*

 *Offer caring support!*

*We will meet the second Thursday of every month starting  
December 8th from 7-8:30pm in the Town Meeting Hall  
Room at Town Hall, 55 Main Street Westford.*

*No registration required*

*Don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions to  
Susan Hanly @ [smhanly1@gmail.com](mailto:smhanly1@gmail.com)*

*Co-sponsored by the Westford Health Department and  
Community Wellness Department*

Revised 1/3/23

## Health Department

Westford Health Department's Public Health Nurse, Gail Johnson, Chair's the Westford Coalition for Non-Violence, (WCNV). Our current mission statement of WCNV is *"Promoting safety and peace in Westford through ongoing conversations and awareness-raising activities, reducing isolation, and fostering community connectedness."*



Please see the recently updated domestic violence educational handbook! If interested in picking up a free copy, please see the following locations: Health Department, JV Fletcher Library, Cameron Senior Center, and Police Station. If you prefer, you may want to visit our WCNV website using the link below, to find a list of resources and a link to view the educational handbook online; the handbook is for educational purposes only.

<https://westfordma.gov/1364/Coalition-for-Non-Violence>

A huge thank you goes out to one of our long-standing members of the coalition, Pat Reppucci, who has spent considerable time on updating this handbook. Pat's attention to detail and perseverance made this resource for our community possible. We truly appreciate all your hard work.

WCNV is a coalition that consists of residents, town employees, survivors, and professionals, who have joined together to promote healthy relationships through education, communication, trust, and mutual respect.

If you, or someone you know, is a victim of domestic violence, please call 911 if in immediate danger, or call SafeLink hotline at 1-877-785-2020. We all deserve to live without fear, and knowing that there are services available to help, may offer some comfort. **YOU ARE NOT ALONE!**

Gail Johnson, BSN, RN  
Public Health Nurse  
Westford Health Dept  
[gjohnson@westfordma.gov](mailto:gjohnson@westfordma.gov)  
O:978-399-2548

Health Department (continued)

# HELPING A LOVED ONE DEALING WITH MENTAL AND/OR SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS

You may suspect or discover your loved one is dealing with a mental illness, drinking too much, or using drugs. As a family member, you can play a central role in getting them the help they need.

### REMEMBER MENTAL AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS ARE TREATABLE

People can, and do, recover. Family support can make all the difference. For more information, visit [www.SAMHSA.gov/families](http://www.SAMHSA.gov/families).

### TALK TO YOUR LOVED ONE

Express your concern and tell them that you're there to help. Create a judgement-free and loving environment to foster conversation and openness.

### SEEK SUPPORT

If you or a loved one needs help, call **1-800-662-HELP (4357)** for free and confidential information and treatment referral.



### BE OPEN

Discuss your family history of mental illness or drug and alcohol use, if relevant. It may help your loved one feel less alone.



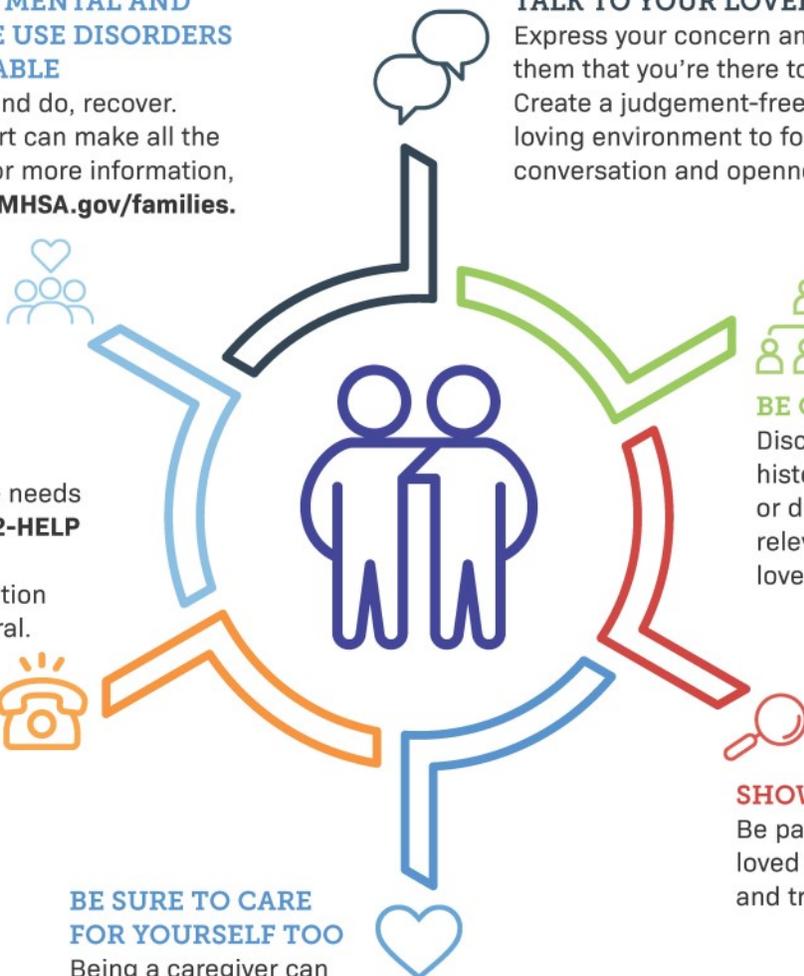
### BE SURE TO CARE FOR YOURSELF TOO

Being a caregiver can be highly stressful and emotionally draining.



### SHOW COMPASSION

Be patient as you help your loved one locate resources and treatment services.



SAMHSA's mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities. 1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727) • 1-800-487-4889 (TDD) • [www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)

## Health Department (continued)

# SUPPORTING A LOVED ONE DEALING WITH MENTAL AND/OR SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS

## STARTING THE CONVERSATION

When a family member is drinking too much, using drugs, or struggling with a mental disorder, your support can be key to getting them the treatment they need. Starting the conversation is the first step to getting help.

### How You Can Help

- 1 IDENTIFY AN APPROPRIATE TIME AND PLACE.** Consider a private setting with limited distractions, such as at home or on a walk.
- 2 EXPRESS CONCERNS AND BE DIRECT.** Ask how they are feeling and describe the reasons for your concern.
- 3 ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR FEELINGS AND LISTEN.** Listen openly, actively, and without judgement.
- 4 OFFER TO HELP.** Provide reassurance that mental and/or substance use disorders are treatable. Help them locate and connect to treatment services.
- 5 BE PATIENT.** Recognize that helping your loved one doesn't happen overnight. Continue reaching out with offers to listen and help.

### What to Say

"I've been worried about you. Can we talk?  
If not, who are you comfortable talking to?"

"I see you're going through something.  
How can I best support you?"

"I care about you and am here to listen. Do  
you want to talk about what's been going on?"

"I've noticed you haven't seemed like  
yourself lately. How can I help?"

For more resources, visit  
[www.SAMHSA.gov/families](http://www.SAMHSA.gov/families).

If you or someone you know needs help,  
call **1-800-662-HELP (4357)** for free and  
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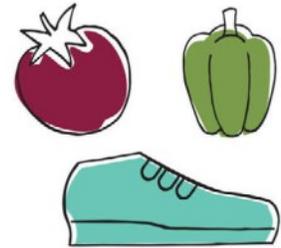
**SAMHSA**  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration

## Health Department (continued)

### Eat Smart, Move More!

Building healthy habits doesn't happen overnight, but **making small changes every day can make a big difference for your heart and brain health.** Eating a healthy diet, maintaining a healthy weight, and getting enough physical activity can help you lower your risk for heart disease and stroke.

This calendar can help you reach your healthy eating and physical activity goals one step at a time. Here are some ideas to get you started and some space for you to fill in your own goals. Don't forget to celebrate the big AND small wins—you got this!



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	Experiment with a new heart-healthy recipe, like these oven-baked sweet potatoes. <a href="https://bit.ly/2JioEwG">https://bit.ly/2JioEwG</a>		Find small ways to get active throughout the day. Take the stairs, or power walk during your lunch break! <a href="http://bit.ly/2mOagPK">http://bit.ly/2mOagPK</a>			Headed to the grocery store? Check food labels for the amount of sodium per serving, and see if there are low/no sodium options available. <a href="http://bit.ly/2GcPqDw">http://bit.ly/2GcPqDw</a>
Try mapping out your meals for the week. Planning ahead can help you stick to a healthy eating lifestyle! <a href="http://bit.ly/2sXykUo">http://bit.ly/2sXykUo</a>		Instead of dining out, cook meals at home and pack leftovers to help cut back on sodium. These Brussels sprouts would make the perfect side! <a href="http://bit.ly/2memcbY">http://bit.ly/2memcbY</a>		Simple swaps can make your meals and snacks healthier. Go for veggies with hummus instead of chips and dip. <a href="http://bit.ly/3t0TF9u">http://bit.ly/3t0TF9u</a>		
	Power through your day with smart snacking. Bring sliced apples or bell peppers to satisfy your cravings. <a href="http://bit.ly/2iPRnGM">http://bit.ly/2iPRnGM</a>		Some of the saltiest foods may not even taste salty. Watch out for the top sources of sodium in your diet. <a href="http://bit.ly/2ccVH3a">http://bit.ly/2ccVH3a</a>			Move a little more every day. Track your physical activities for the week—even vacuuming and gardening could count! <a href="http://bit.ly/2HVe8dg">http://bit.ly/2HVe8dg</a>
		Add flavor without the salt. Try a new spice or herb, like paprika or thyme. <a href="https://bit.ly/3eE20Mz">https://bit.ly/3eE20Mz</a>		Rethink your drink. Instead of soda or sweetened juices, try flavoring your water with cucumbers or lemons. <a href="http://bit.ly/2k5Wun0">http://bit.ly/2k5Wun0</a>	Ordering from a restaurant? Split your meal with a friend or family member to lower your sodium intake. <a href="http://bit.ly/2aXvxfR">http://bit.ly/2aXvxfR</a>	

#### Additional Resources

[Recipes for a Heart-Healthy Lifestyle](#) (Million Hearts®)  
[Sodium Reduction](#) (CDC)  
[Healthy Eating for a Healthy Weight](#) (CDC)

[DASH Eating Plan](#) (NHLBI)  
[Healthy Eating Tools](#) (MyPlate)  
[Move Your Way](#) (HHS)

## Recycling Commission

### Make these Simple Resolutions to Protect our Environment



New Year's resolutions. Why don't we keep them? Maybe because we sometimes assign ourselves to make big changes that are difficult to maintain.

With the start of the new year, why not commit to just a few easy changes that will increase your commitment to protecting our environment?

Here are a few ideas:

- Shop with your own tote bags. Many are already doing this, but if you're not – why not? Tote bags are easier to carry than store bags, which are now often paper bags here in Westford. They're washable. And if initially you leave them behind in your car, be patient. You'll get in the habit of grabbing them eventually.
- Use a refillable water bottle. Fill it at home and bring it with you. Why buy plastic bottles of water that need to be recycled or disposed of?
- Carry your own straw. A few years ago, I bought a set of hard glass straws. They're wide, fit nicely into my mouth, and feel smooth and comfortable. I keep one in my car – in the pocket on the back of my passenger seat, and when I stop for an iced coffee, I know it's there. No more plastic straws for me.
- Reduce your packaging. Buy the large 32 oz tub of yogurt, not multiple 5 oz. ones. The large tub can be easily recycled, and there's less plastic material than with the small containers, along with the packaging that envelops them.
- Better your recycling habits. No more "wish-cycling" - as some call the habit of tossing something in the bin and hoping it's recyclable. Go to <https://recyclesmartma.org/> to see if an item is recyclable or not.

Post this QR code near your recycling bin and it will bring you there:



**Best wishes for a Happy 2023 to everyone – and for Happy Recycling!**

[Westfordma.gov/recycles](https://www.westfordma.gov/recycles)