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HEADLINES



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MHS HOLDS CLASS OF 2021 COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY



BY TERRY ROGERS

Despite postponements on both June 10 and 11, Milford High School Class of 2021 celebrated their commencement ceremony at Briggs Stadium on June 12. Principal Jesse Parsley welcomed the graduates and families in attendance, commending the students on completing their education during an unprecedented time.

“To the great class of 2021, on behalf of the Milford School Board of Education, congratulations on your graduation,” Dr. Kevin Dickerson, superintendent, said. “Please cherish this great occasion. We are very proud of each of you for persevering through and overcoming the challenges you have faced during your high school experience to earn your high school diploma. We are very proud of each and every one of you for the person

that you are, and we are looking forward to learning of your many accomplishments in your future endeavors.”

Emma Sekscinski, class president, presented the graduating senior class, reflecting on the past four years they had spent at Milford High School.

“Let’s rewind to freshman year,” Sekscinski said. “All of us sitting in in that freshman auditorium waiting for Mr. Snyder to tell us all about Milford High School and having no idea the experiences we were about to go through. That was the year of firsts, first homecoming, first pep rally. It was all very exciting. As the year went on, we looked back on late night football games and Applebee’s half-price apps. We remember the next year when, as only sophomores, we won the Spirit Stick over

the seniors. Junior year was the hardest classwork of all, however, we cannot forget how we won almost every Homecoming Float competition. As junior year went on, March came around. Rumors started flying about COVID-19 and how no one knows what will happen next. Then, March 13. That was the last day we, the Class of 2021, were all in school together in what was a normal setting. Since that day, nothing has been normal. Our senior year was very different than in year’s past but we were able to make it work. We started to be able to attend spring sports and support our classmates. We were able to pull off a prom which we all know was very successful. Despite the differences in our senior year, every single one of us sitting here today have shown our administrators, our teachers, our families and our community our dedication and passion.”

Salutatorian Kayla Clausen joked about earning the title.

“I am the blonde that often confuses her left and her right, but I somehow pulled off becoming salutatorian,” Clausen said. “Upon learning that I received this honor, my first instinct was to turn to Google, our most reliable resource especially now during a pandemic. I found an Urban Dictionary definition that said, and I quote “the less important person to give a speech at graduation and the student who missed so many events that people thought she was a hermit to study just to get second place.” That was not at all helpful. Since this speech is my last homework assignment as a student here at Milford High School, I am going to try my best. Over the years, when asked what I wanted to be when I grew up, my answer varied drastically. In kindergarten, I decided quite confidently that I was going to be an art teacher. Then, I decided I was going to go to Harvard to become

See **COMMENCEMENT** on **PAGE 4**

COMMENCEMENT from PAGE 3

a hairdresser. In middle school, I decided I wanted to be an orthodontist until I realized that would entail 12 more years of school and afterward, I could not change my mind. Then, I wanted to go into foreign service, but realized I did not want to live in another country. I then realized that I was spending too much time focusing on what I wanted to be and now who I wanted to be. I have narrowed it down to this. I want to be someone who always believes in herself. Who strives to always use her voice and make herself heard. Someone who is fulfilled by her life and career, but most of all someone who rises above challenges instead of caving in fear of failure.”

Allison Benton, valedictorian of the Class of 2021, joked that it was nice to finally see the students who kept their cameras off during virtual learning and thanked her family for their support as well as her peers.

“Despite the pandemic mandating that we stay six feet apart, today we stand together more than ever before,” Benton said. “To be honest and frank, I am not giving any advice in my speech. Despite the notion that I am all-knowing and that this speech should be imparting my confidential secrets of success to my peers, I am simply an 18-year-old girl with a microphone they gave me for earning a high number on an outdated system that theoretically measures brain power. Having the highest GPA does not make me any wiser than the person sitting beside you. So, trying to deliver a speech comprised of the same life lessons that have been drilled into us is impractical. So rather than waste your time and give you a cliché rendition of the advice we have been lectured on, I would like to directly speak to the

See COMMENCEMENT on PAGE 5



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COMMENCEMENT from PAGE 4

class and offer a few inspiring words. If there is anything that is certain in life, it is change. The world is constantly shifting below our feet despite our desire for it to stand still. Just as our day-to-day lives have been drastically altered, senior year has been anything but stagnant. I am here to remind you that a ship is safe in the harbor, but that is not what ships are for. Ships are furnished with the necessary tools and attributes to conquer the menaces of the open seas. If a ship remains in the harbor, it is not fulfilling its purpose. I encourage each of you to grab hold of your ship and steer masterfully through any storm that comes your way. You are Buccaneers after all. You are meant to leave the harbor and face the arduous seas.”



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CULTURE



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BY TERRY ROGERS

On Oct. 5, 2020, Tina DiSaia was diagnosed with head and neck cancer and underwent surgery on Nov. 17 to remove a tumor from one-third of her tongue and 14 lymph nodes. Of those 14 lymph nodes, pathology reports found that three of the nodes were cancerous, placing Tina in Stage Four.

Determined to fight the cancer, Tina started chemotherapy and radiation in early January. A week after starting therapy, her airway began to close and she underwent an emergency tracheotomy. She also needed to have a feeding tube put in due to the swelling. At this time, it was discovered that her cancer had mutated to a more aggressive form, leading to 37 rounds of radiation and three extremely heavy chemotherapy sessions.

On May 18, 2021, a 90-day PET scan found that the cancer had spread to numerous areas in her body, including her clavicles, the side of her neck, tongue,

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shoulder and lungs. She is currently awaiting information on a treatment plan that may include immunotherapy.

In order to help Tina, her husband, Joe and their five children during these difficult and uncertain times, EasySpeak Distilling will hold Sunday Funday on Aug. 8, a fundraiser to benefit the DiSaia family. All proceeds from the event will go directly to the family to help them with medical and living expenses as Tina fights her cancer.

“This will be a day packed with fun,” Marissa King, co-owner of EasySpeak, said. “We are planning a cornhole tournament, DJ, moon bounce, slip and slide, silent auction, vendor tables and so much more to try to raise as much as we can for this family.”

Tickets to the event are \$25 for adults and children 14 and older; \$10 for children 4 to 14 and free for any children under 4. EasySpeak is also seeking sponsors whose name and logo will be placed on a t-shirt made exclusively for the event. Diamond Sponsorships are \$1,000 and include the t-shirt logo, social media recognition, banner logo placement, table at the event, four tickets and open bar for those four attendees.

Platinum sponsorship is \$750 and includes the t-shirt and banner logo, social media recognition, a table at the event and four tickets. Gold sponsorship is \$500 and includes banner and t-shirt logos as well as social media recognition. The Silver sponsorship for \$400 includes

the t-shirt logo and social media recognition while the Bronze sponsorship at \$300 will include the t-shirt logo.

“We are also having a silent auction,” King said. “Anyone who wishes to donate items for the silent auction can contact me here at the restaurant.”



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MISPILLION ART LEAGUE'S ANNUAL 6×6 SILENT AUCTION



BY TERRY ROGERS

Yes! We are once again, holding the ever-popular Annual 6×6 Silent Auction fundraiser at Mispillion Art League. The display is up and the bidding begins June 9 and runs through June 19. On Saturday, June 19, we will have a reception and final bidding from 6-8 p.m.—highest bid wins!

To participate, stop by and get your bidder number. Then take a look at the 92 submissions from Art League members and many non-members, and place your bidder number on the bid sheet for the pieces you can't live without! This year's submissions contain a wonderful variety of mediums, including ceramic, glass, collage, watercolor, oil, acrylic, and more. Bidding starts at \$25 and rises in \$5 increments. And to add a little zing and pizzaz this year, put down \$200, all bidding stops, and the piece is yours (it happened once last week)!

Located at 5 N Walnut Street in Milford, the Art League is open Tuesday–Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Help us protect our volunteers and visitors by wearing a face mask if you are not fully vaccinated.

The Mispillion Art League is an exempt organization as described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

This organization is supported in part by a grant from the Delaware Division of the Arts, a state agency, in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts. The division promotes Delaware arts events on www.DelawareScene.com.

For information contact Sonja Frey, MAL operations manager, mispillionarts@gmail.com, 302-430-7646.



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MILFORD HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS TAKE FINAL LAP THROUGH TOWN



BY TERRY ROGERS

On June 9, Milford High School seniors began lining up at the school before 5:30 p.m. in decorated vehicles for their last drive through town as a student. The Milford High School Senior Cruise has been a tradition in the town for as long as anyone can remember, although there are no details to indicate when the event first began.

Last year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the cruise was moved from its traditional noon start time to 6:00 p.m. on the senior's last day. Feedback regarding the changed time was positive and the school decided to continue with the later time for the 2021 senior class as well.

With Milfordians lining the streets, some parents of graduating seniors and some simply members of the

community who want to recognize this big accomplishment, the students began by circling the Milford High School campus at 6 p.m. They then exited the campus, following Church Street where they circled Benjamin Banneker Elementary School's campus. Leaving Banneker, the caravan drove down Walnut Street, then Southeast Second Street to Lulu M. Ross Elementary's campus where they circled the campus of that school as well as Mispillion Elementary.

Graduation was scheduled for June 10, but due to forecasted inclement weather, the district chose to postpone the event until June 11 at Briggs Stadium.



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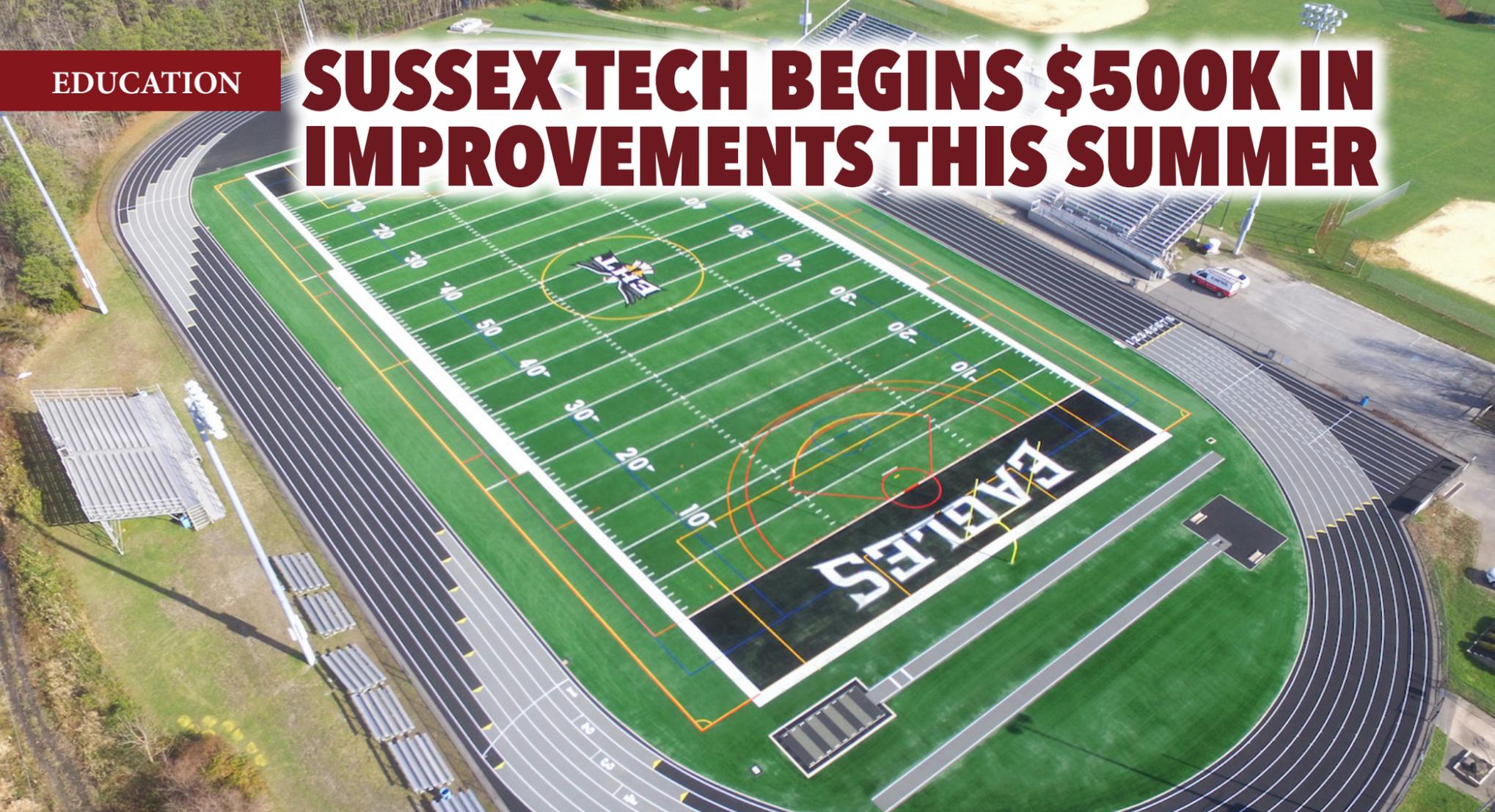
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SUSSEX TECH BEGINS \$500K IN IMPROVEMENTS THIS SUMMER



BY BETSY PRICE

Sussex Technical High School will undergo multiple improvements this summer, including replacing a leaking roof, fixing a parking lot drainage system and resurfacing the currently unusable track

Just over \$500,000 of work was recently approved by the district board of education. “These are long-overdue investments needed to keep our building and grounds in proper working order,” said Superintendent Kevin Carson. The projects include:

- Replacing the roof of the 700 wing, which dates back to its original construction in 1961. The contract was awarded to TA Roofing and Waterproofing.

- Repairing a section of failed drainage system under the main bus parking lot, which led to a partial collapse several years ago. The contract was awarded to Thompson & Sons Contracting.

- Resurfacing of the high school track, believed to be the first major improvement for the track. The contract was awarded to American Athletic Track and Turf.



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MILFORD HIGH SCHOOL HOLDS SENIOR AWARDS CEREMONY



BY TERRY ROGERS

On June 9, Milford High School celebrated outstanding seniors in an award ceremony. The ceremony was held in Briggs Stadium and also live streamed for those who wished to see members of the Class of 2021 receive awards.

Students named to the Academic Hall of Fame included Allison Benton, Kayla Clausen, Summer Davis, Zane Wallace, Antoine Gravat, Cole Garlick, Rebecca Wisniewski, Kevin Lin, Tristan Stevenson, Josiah Moore, Matthew Stangl, Sophia Williams, Deena Johnson, Roman Stump, Emma Sekscinski, Alex Mergner, Kirk Hammer, Cannon Cline, Haleigh Baker, Emanuel Trejo, James Stangl, Mallory Burk, Corey Messick, Bridget Stump, Victoria

Jordan, Samantha Jacona, Zachariah Stutzman, Jordyn Hills, Matthew Hague, Madeline Sekscinski, Shelby Ohlig, Sam Sickles, Domihanna Peralta-Zabala, Mirella DeLeon, Matthew Webb, Jr. and Blandine Aldajuste.

Kayla Clausen, Alison Benton, Tristan Stevenson and Rebecca Wisniewski received the Honors Program Academic Leadership Award in English Language Arts while Kayla Clausen received the Milford High School English Award. Receiving the Honors Program Academic Leadership Award in Math were Kayla Clausen, Allison Benton, Cole Garlick, Tristan Stevenson, Emanuel Trejo, Zane Wallace, Kevin Lin and Roman Stump. Antoine

See AWARDS on page 14

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AWARDS from page 13

Gravat received the Milford High School Outstanding Mathematics Student Award.

Students receiving the Honors Program Academic Leadership Award in Social Studies were Allison Benton, Kayla Clausen, Antoine Gravat, Tristan Stevenson, Zane Wallace, Kevin Lin, Summer Davis, Rebecca Wisniewski, Roman Stump, Kirk Hammer and Alex Mergner. Zane Wallace received the Daughters of the American Revolution History Award. Alison Benton, Cole Garlick, Tristan Stevenson, Emanuel Trejo, Zane Wallace and Emma Sekscinski received the Honors Program Academic Leadership Award in Science.

Alison Benton received the Dr. G.W. Pleasanton Science Award while Emanuel Trejo received the Milford High School World Language Award. Bruce Ochoa Mazanegos received the EL Department Award. Receiving the DELTA Amanda Sapp Parisi Awards were Kacy Charles and Michelle Perez-Lucas. In addition, Michelle Perez-Lucas received the Delaware Certificate of Multiliteracy along with Adrian Samaniego.

Students receiving the Senior Excellence in Theatre Participation Awards included Mary Jocelyn Argo, Jacob Elliot, Jesus Gomez, Hadley O'Day, Dylan Phillips, Bridget Stump, Zachariah Stutzman, Rebecca Wisniewski, Valerie Barron and Mia Demby. Jocelyn Argo received the Outstanding Choral Awards for Service while Jacob Elliott received the Outstanding Choral Awards for Performance. Tristan Stevenson received the Donald Lee Gibson Instrumental Musical Award and Dylan Phillips received the Outstanding Choral Student Award. Rebecca Wisniewski received the Outstanding Dramatic Art Student Award. Madeline Sekscinski received the Milford

See AWARDS on page 15



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AWARDS from page 14

High School Visual Art Award and Mallory Burk received the Kelly Tyrell Gill Excellence in Art Award.

Deena Johnson received the Outstanding Finance/Accounting Award as well as the Milford High School Outstanding Business Student Award. Matthew Stangl received the Milford High School Outstanding Allied Health Student Award while Gillian Strawder received the Milford High School Outstanding Teacher Academy Award. Krystal Robinson Strickland was awarded the Senior Excellence in Digital Communication Technology honors and Samantha Jacona received the Technology Student Association Award. Emma Sekscinski received the Most Creative Communication Technology Award.

Cannon Cline received the Milford High School Outstanding STEM Student Award as well as the Milford Engineering Award. Jose Perez was presented with the Milford Engineering Internship Award. Victoria Jordan and Deena Johnson received the Overall Senior Excellence in Career and Technical Education Award. Miranda Walker received the Senior Excellence in Agricultural Science Education Award while Dayvon Elliot received the Jannie Martin Award.

Emma Sekscinski received the Milford High School Leadership Award and Allison Benton the Robert Leitheiser Service Award. The Captain James H. Johnson Award for Outstanding Male Athlete went to Emanuelle Carranza while the Milford High School Outstanding Female Athlete Award went to Summer Davis. Alex Mergner received the United States Marine Corps Scholastic Excellence Award while Sophia Williams received the United States Marine Corps Semper Fidelis Award. Corey Messick and Samantha Jacona received the United

See AWARDS on page 15



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AWARDS from page 15

States Marine Corps Distinguished Athlete Award. The 2021 Milfordian yearbook was dedicated to Nick Brannan. Alison Benton and Kayla Clausen received the Secretary of Education Scholars award.

Students who received the 2021 Superintendent Award included Haleigh Rachelle Baker, Allison Benton, Mallory Quinn Burk, Kalya Elizabeth Clausen, Cannon Douglas Cline, Summer Caroline Davis, Cole Nicholas Garlick, Antoine Paulin Florentin Gravat, Kirk Ellis Hammer, Jordyn Nicholas Hills, Deena Lynette Johnson, Victoria Rose Jordan, Kevin Lin, Alex Christopher Mergner, Corey John Messick, Josiah David Moore, Shelby Lynn Ohlig, Emma Claire Sekscinski, Madeline Rose Sekscinski, Matthew John Stangl, Tristan Marc Stevenson, Roman Jacob Lane Stump, Zane Whitaker Wallace, Bryce Tyler Wells, Sophia Elisabeth Williams, Rhe'Ann Lymariona Williams and Rebecca Marie Wisniewski.

The Leo Club/Milford Lions Club Scholarship went to Allison Benton. The Milford Lions Club Jim Willis Scholarship went to Cole Garlick while the Milford Lions Club Randy Harp Scholarship went to Emma Sekscinski. The Milford Lions Club Scholarship went to Summer Davis and the Delaware Lions Club James A. McCarty Memorial Scholarship went to Cole Garlick. Summer Davis was named the WBOC Mountaire Farms Scholar Athlete and Samantha Jacona received the Dr. Tricia Martin Scholarship.

The Raymond W. Masten & Edith W. Masten Scholarships went to Deena Johnson and James Stangl while the Rotary Traditional Scholarships went to Emma Sekscinski, Alex Mergner and Summer Davis. Cannon Cline was awarded the Rotary Warnell Scholarship while Matthew Hague was awarded the Rotary "Service Above Self"

Scholarship. Kayla Clausen received the Rotary Garbutt Family Trust Scholarship and Samantha Jacona received the Maureen Schab Education Scholarship. James Stangl was awarded the Citibank NAF Scholarship.

Receiving the Chamber of Commerce for Greater Milford Scholarships were Gregory Auguste, Brianna Lewis, Tavon Newman and Khi Woods. Summer Davis received the WGMD Sports Booster Scholarship while Emma Sekscinski received the Janosik Family Scholarship. Kala Clausen received the J.D. O'Connor Scholarship and Deena Johnson was awarded the Southern Delaware Alliance for Racial Justice Scholarship.

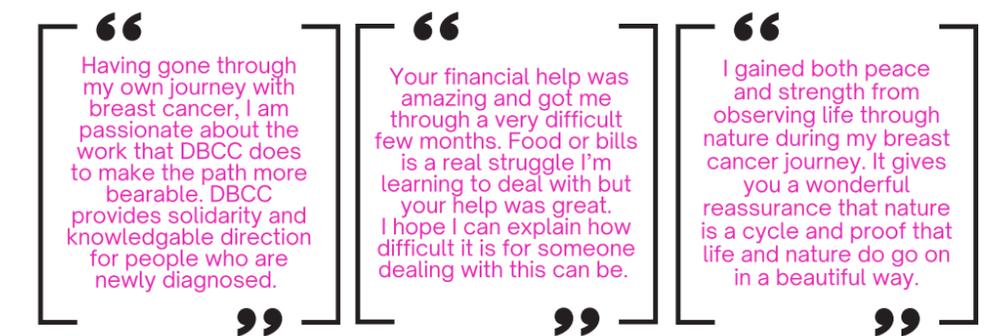
The Thelma C. Mayhew Scholarship went to Hali Sapp and the Worth M. Hudson Scholarship to Summer Davis. The Milford Elks Lodge Scholarships were awarded to Emma Sekscinski and Cole Garlick. Edwine Corvil received the Milford Education Association Scholarship and Matthew Hague was awarded the David J. Berezowski Football Scholarship. The Dr. Ben Carson Scholarship went to Summer Davis. Matthew Stangl and Emma Sekscinski both received Auxiliary of Bayhealth Sussex Campus Scholarships while Allison Benton received the Jill Biden Scholarship.

The Barbara Kimmey Pierce Memorial Scholarship went to Jordyn Hills and the James H. Postles Scholarship to Allison Benton, who also received the Dr. C. Edward Graybeal and the Milford High School Alumni Scholarships. Emma Sekscinski and Kevin Lin received the Lee Hirsch Scholarship. James Stangl received the Chester T. Dickerson Scholarship, Kayla Clausen the Garbutt Family Scholarship, Kevin Lin the James L. Davis Scholarship and Bryce Wells the Sean A. Hudson Memorial Scholarship.



The Delaware Breast Cancer Coalition (DBCC) has been connecting and supporting breast cancer survivors, and their families in communities across Delaware for over 30 years!

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HAZZARD JOINS MILFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT ADMIN TEAM

BY TERRY ROGERS

Brittany Hazzard, Ed.D., LMSW, recently joined the Milford School District administrative team as the supervisor of Equity and

Support Services. Dr. Hazzard has significant experience in equity and diversity.

“I have served on statewide equity teams, public school equity and diversity teams, co-lead equity initiatives at the non-profit level, Dr. Hazzard said. “I have also provided equity and diversity focused trainings as well as consultations within the community. I plan to focus on improving diversity and engagement including working as a team with the district and the community to understand and guide the practices that foster equity. I will also focus on equitable practices throughout the district through providing leadership, communication, guidance and support for Milford School District and the community in areas of equity.”

Dr. Hazzard is a Sussex County native, earning her undergraduate degree in Criminal Justice from the University of Maryland Eastern Shore as a scholarship student-athlete. She earned her Master’s in Social Work from Delaware State University and her Doctor of Edu-

cation in Organizational Leadership from Wilmington University. Dr. Hazzard is also a Leadership Delaware Inc. alumnus. Her experience is founded in social work, both clinical and school, as well as trauma, youth intensive mental health and family-based mental health.

“In order for students to be successful, it is vital at school and district levels to support fairness and inclusion,” Dr. Hazzard said. “We also need to ensure that every child has the resources, supports and interventions they need. I think the best part of this position will be building relationships with and supporting students, staff and the community.”

Challenges Dr. Hazzard expects to face are meeting the needs of every student.

“When students are provided with resources that fit individual circumstances, it can positively impact the entire school environment,” Dr. Hazzard said. “That will extend to our entire community.”



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BY TERRY ROGERS

The Village Café is now open to the public in the Milford Wellness Village and Joan Page, director of Dietary Services, says that they welcome anyone to join them for breakfast or lunch. The new café is located in what was formerly the Milford Memorial Hospital Cafeteria which has been given a facelift and upgrade.

“Right now, you can get to the café by coming around back to where the glass windows are and following the signs to the Village Café,” Page said. “We are open from 6:30 a.m. until 10 a.m. and then again from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m., serving breakfast and lunch. You can get breakfast sandwiches, pancakes, we also have premade carry-and-go sandwiches, yogurt parfaits, Caesar salad, and more. We have a hot entrée each day as well as fresh soups each day.”

VILLAGE CAFÉ OPENS IN MILFORD WELLNESS VILLAGE

Daphne Brumbey, executive director and general manager of the Milford Wellness Village explained that a new entrance is under construction that will make it easier for the public to find the café. In addition, they have ordered patio furnishing in order to add patio seating.

“We plan to hold an official ribbon cutting on Wednesday, July 28,” Brumbey said. “We hope to have the new entrance completed by early July which will encourage people to stop in and try some of our delicious food.”

In addition to regular menu items, Page explained that the Village Café will also have specials that will change daily. Breakfast and lunch can be picked up in the café or ordered online using the Clover app. Customers pay in advance on the app, which then provides them with a timeframe when they can stop to pick up their items.

“We are excited to have people stop in and see the upgrades,” Brumbey said. “It is much more inviting and pleasant since we have remodeled. The food is very good and the prices very reasonable. It is a great place for people who are walking in the area to stop and grab something quick and easy for breakfast or lunch.”

You can download the Clover app from the App Store or Google Play or you can access the menu by visiting <https://www.clover.com/online-ordering/polaris-hlth-dine-polar4-milford>.



**DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM
THROUGH THE MILFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT**

The Milford School District is participating in the Summer Food Service Program. Meals will be provided to all eligible children free of charge. Applications and income eligibility forms are not required.

Acceptance and participation requirements for the Program and all activities are the same for all regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability, and there will be no discrimination in the course of the meal service.

THESE SITES ARE OPEN TO GENERAL PUBLIC

Meals will be provided at the following sites from June 28 through Aug. 5 for the public:

- Banneker Elem. School's 4th Street Bus Entrance – Thursdays 11-12 p.m.
- Mt Zion Church in Ellendale – Thursdays 11:30-12 p.m.
- Milford High School – Wednesdays 3:30-5:15 p.m.
- Mispillion Apartments – Thursdays 11:00-11:10 a.m.

THESE SITES ARE NOT OPEN TO GENERAL PUBLIC

Meals will be provided at the following sites from June 28 through Aug. 5 for enrolled students only:

- The Learning Center: Monday-Friday 8 a.m. and 11 a.m.
- Morris Early Learning Center: Monday-Thursday 8 a.m. and 11 a.m.
- Mispillion Elementary: Monday-Thursday 8 a.m. and 11 a.m.
- Milford Central Academy: Monday-Thursday 8 a.m. and 11 a.m.

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(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
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Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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BY PAM GEORGE

Milford's Benvenuto is not your average Italian restaurant. Yes, the family-owned eatery embraces the cuisine and ambiance of Tuscany. But it also delivers the unexpected.

"We change what we do all the time," said owner Lisa Johnson. In winter, for instance, guests can attend wine dinners featuring high-end Italian wines from different regions. But come summer, the restaurant switches to cocktail events with refreshing tropical themes.

The activities help Benvenuto stand apart. "We are not just a restaurant," Johnson maintained. "We want to be a destination. We have people who drive two or three hours to dine. They get something here that they can't find anywhere else on Delmarva."

To be extraordinary means starting at the top, she continued. For proof, Benvenuto is hosting master mixologist **Brian Van Flandern**, from June 28 to July 2, for a series of events, including The Thirsty Games, an "Iron Chef"-style throwdown focused on cocktails.

MILFORD'S BENVENUTO INVITES MIXOLOGISTS TO COMPETE IN THE THIRSTY GAMES

On Thursday, July 1, the competition—a playful riff on "The Hunger Games"—will occur at Sunset Cove, the Milford event venue that Johnson and husband Walter "Poncho" Johnson also own.

Van Flandern, who is organizing the challenge, is president of Creative Cocktail Consultants, which designs profitable luxury cocktail programs and trains staff in hotels, restaurants and resorts.

The author of five books has appeared on the TV shows "Bar Rescue," "The Barefoot Contessa," "Food-ography," "Property Brothers Forever" and "The Early Show."

No wonder the Food Network calls him "America's Top Mixologist."

To enter the cocktail competition, applicants must write a paragraph detailing their experience and why Van Flandern should select them. They must also attach a photograph of their signature cocktail and describe it. The deadline is Sunday, June 20, and applicants should submit materials to info@benvenuto-restaurant.

On the day of the event, contestants will compete using spirits from **Seacrets Distilling Co.** in Ocean City, Maryland.

See **BENVENUTO** on **PAGE 21**



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BENVENUTO from PAGE 20

“They have award-winning spirits, and they have done a phenomenal job of building their reputation and creating a destination,” Johnson said.

The finalists, who must think on their feet, will have access to a “grocery store” of items to make a cocktail. At stake is \$1,000, a bottle of Seacrets’ spirits and a copy of “Whiskey Cocktails” signed by Van Flandern.

If you’d rather watch than shake and stir, make plans to attend the event. Each person will receive a welcome cocktail created by Van Flandern. Benvenuto executive chef Jesus Giordiany will whip up a Caribbean feast for the tropical-themed venue, and Raymond Charles & the Caribbean Authentics will perform.

Guest also can purchase three cigars for \$25, one of which will be hand-rolled by Francisco Almonte of Dominican Big League Cigars.

It’s a good deal, according to Johnson, who sells fine cigars at Benvenuto for \$15 and up.

“A lot of our guests like to go out on the back patio by the fireplace, have a brandy or bourbon and cigar,” Johnson explained.

The cost to attend The Thirsty Games is \$125 per person and attendance is limited to under 125 guests.

Van Flandern, who grew up in Washington, D.C., and vacationed in Rehoboth, appreciates Benvenuto’s Milford location, Johnson said. The restaurant can cater to the sophisticated diners who are moving to the area in increasing numbers.

“They want things that they were able to get in the cities,” she said. Those activities include bourbon and tequila dinners with Van Flandern. The \$100-per-person dinners at Benvenuto are limited to 25 people each.

Customers also get a story. Benvenuto, which means welcome, was inspired by a family friendship that dates back to 1955 when Johnson’s parents lived in Italy for 11 months. Subsequent generations have continued to visit each other and stay in touch.

Benvenuto opened in early 2020, and Johnson also credits faith for the business’s success, despite the challenging times.

“God owns all of this, and he expects us to do the best of our ability,” she said. “We’re just grateful. We want to be the best we can be so that our guests feel at home.”

For more information about the events, visit the restaurant’s **Facebook** page.



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GOVERNMENT & POLITICS



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BY TERRY ROGERS

On June 14, Milford City Council adopted the proposed FY2021-22 budget as presented as of June 9. The budget is for over \$47 million and includes a tax increase of \$0.0275, bringing the total property tax rate to \$0.48275 for every \$100 of assessed value. City Manager Mark Whitfield explained that information will be sent out in future electric bills with details on how the increase will impact the average property owner in Milford.

“This is a decrease from the initial \$0.065 increase we were looking at,” Councilman Andy Fulton said. “I think that with the lower increase and the budget cuts we have managed, this is a much more manageable budget.”

Before the vote to approve the budget, the floor was opened to public comment. Ryan Lowell stated that he had forwarded questions and concerns to the city clerk as well as to Councilman Brian Baer. Councilman Baer indicated he had received the questions and forwarded those to the City Manager during the meeting.

CITY COUNCIL APPROVES FY2021-22 BUDGET

“My concerns had to do with some legislation pending at the state level for raising the minimum wage,” Lowell said. “Another was about the status of take-home vehicles for the police. I also noticed that city employees will take a hit, paying 10 to 15 percent more for healthcare. It seems really crummy to give them a pay raise that is then eaten up by insurance.”

Whitfield explained that take home vehicles were not part of the budget although Chief Kenneth Brown could address that in the future.

“The issue with healthcare, that was addressed last year, and employees were not only given their regular cost of living but had the opportunity for increases in merit bonuses as well,” Whitfield said. “We did factor in the cost of the increase and we gave employees a year to make any changes they could make to offset that cost.”

Council approved the budget unanimously.



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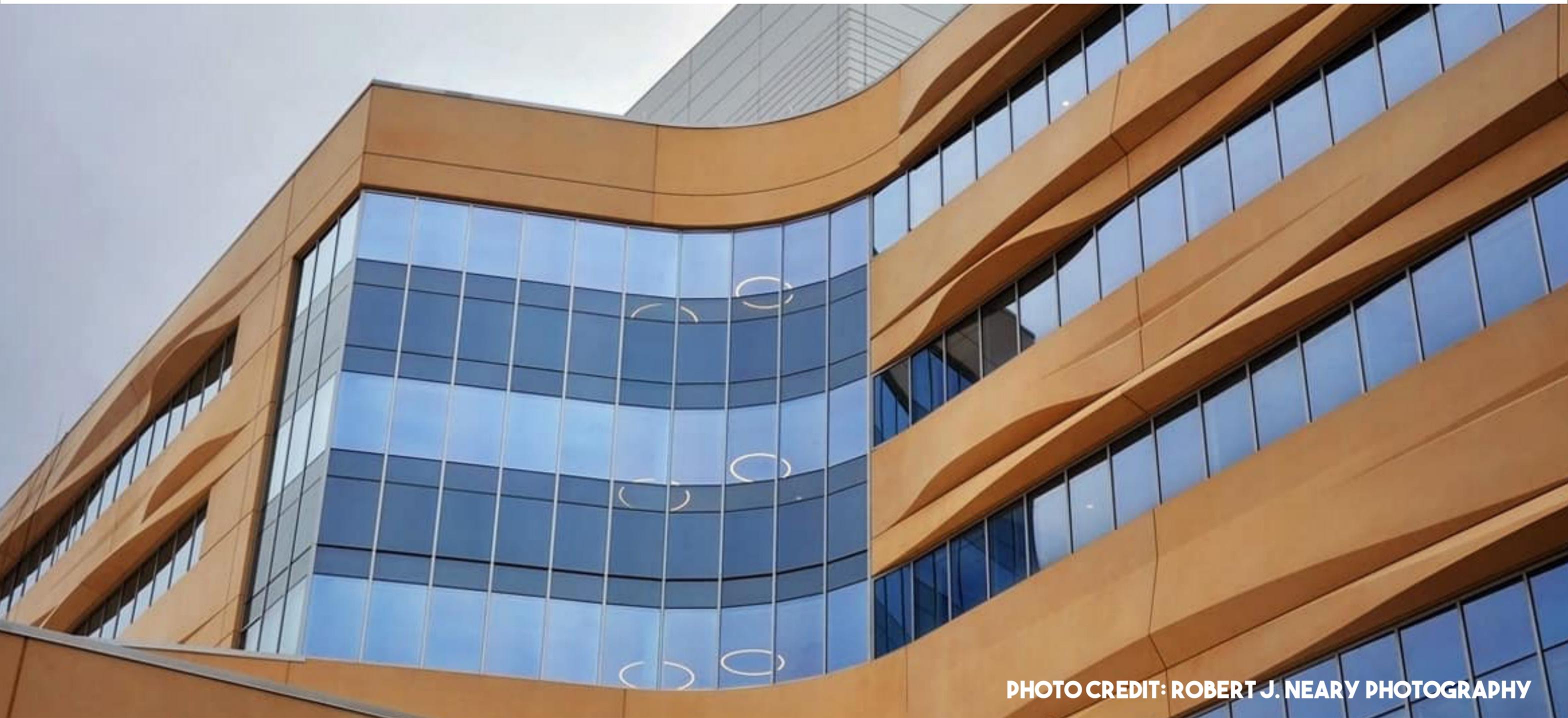


PHOTO CREDIT: ROBERT J. NEARY PHOTOGRAPHY

CITY OF MILFORD SPONSORS FREE VACCINE POP-UP AT RIVERWALK FARMERS MARKET

BY TERRY ROGERS

The city of Milford, in partnership with Downtown Milford, Inc.'s Riverwalk Farmers Market, started sponsoring a free weekly vaccine pop-up site on Saturday, June 12. The pop-up will run every Saturday from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. in the amphitheater behind the Milford Public Library. This is the first vaccine pop-up in the state to partner with a farmers market and the first in southern Delaware to partner with a municipality.

The Pfizer vaccine will be offered to individuals 12+ and second doses can be administered at a future Riverwalk Farmers Market or any Curative site in Delaware. Guardians of minors must be present or complete an electronic consent form to allow a minor to receive the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine without a guardian present.

Local restaurant gift cards will be offered to the first 10 people vaccinated each week (while supplies last) and all participants will be entered into the DEWins Vaccine Incentive Program through June 29. Prizes range from Shorebirds tickets, state park passes, tickets to Firefly, DART passes for a year, free Delaware tolls, a full scholarship to a Delaware university, and \$302,000 cash and are drawn twice a week.

Curative Inc. will be administering the vaccine, as well as providing 24-hour COVID-19 testing. Pre-registration is not required, but recommended to save time the day of. Interested persons can register here: <https://curative.com/sites/29280/walkup>.

All expenses for the pop-up events are funded by the American Rescue Plan Act.

Another vaccine pop-up is scheduled for Thursday, June 17, at the Greater Milford Boys & Girls Club (101 Delaware Veterans Blvd) from 10:30 a.m.-2 p.m. for the Latino community. The Pfizer vaccine will be available.

The city of Milford, incorporated in 1807 and located in Kent and Sussex counties along the Mispillion River, is home to 10,000+ year-round residents, 500+ retail businesses and non-profits, local restaurants, parks, trails, small town events, major healthcare providers, an historic shipyard, and its own school district. Known throughout the state as River Town, Art Town, Home Town, the city celebrates the beauty of its natural resources, the ingenuity of its people and its commitment to quality of life.










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BY TERRY ROGERS

The General Surgery Residency Program is the third of Bayhealth's Graduate Medical Education (GME) programs to launch and has recently earned accreditation by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME). General Surgery Program Director Bradford Mitchell, MD, FACS, ECNU, is leading the charge. He is an experienced general surgeon who specializes in endocrine surgery and sees patients with Bayhealth General Surgery, Dover, as part of Bayhealth Medical Group.

Bayhealth's General Surgery Residency provides comprehensive surgical training for licensed physicians recently graduated from medical school. It is a five-year program where residents will work under the guidance of faculty physicians. Welcoming these new doctors will mean greater access to top-notch surgical care for our

MOLDING FUTURE SURGEONS: BAYHEALTH LAUNCHES THIRD RESIDENCY PROGRAM

community members who need it. Recruiting is already underway to fill the first three slots for residents to join the program in July 2022. Bayhealth will welcome three new general surgery residents each year for a total of 15 in the program's fifth year when operating at full capacity.

"We're thrilled to start our General Surgery Residency program to mold the next generation of talented surgeons here at Bayhealth," said Dr. Mitchell. "We have an expert and diverse group of faculty who are passionate about sharing their knowledge and preparing residents to be compassionate physicians and technically excellent in their field. General surgery is a very competitive specialty and we expect to attract a high-caliber class of residents to join us."

Bayhealth will begin accepting General Surgery Residency Program applications later this year through the Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS). Visit www.BayhealthGME.org to learn more.



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By Sal Mancino-DPT, Balance/Vestibular Concussion Therapist and Clinical Director, Lewes DE office.

One minute you feel fine, the next minute everything is spinning! It happened recently to a coworker who woke up one morning and found that any little movement sent the room spinning and her stomach lurching. She could not even get out of bed. Her doctor told her she had benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (BPPV), a type of dizziness common among older adults, and for which there is an amazingly easy fix. BPPV is caused

MESSAGE FROM YOUR LOCAL PHYSICAL THERAPIST: THE WORLD IS SPINNING! I'M DIZZY!

by a problem in the inner ear. It most often occurs in people over the age of 50 and more often in women than in men. It happens when a small piece of calcium crystal inside the ear becomes dislodged and enters the inner ear's fluid-filled canals, where it disrupts the way, your brain keeps you balanced and causes dizziness or spinning sensations.

Possible Causes of Vertigo:

The condition can often occur out of the blue, as my coworker discovered. A local otolaryngologist stated that the stickiness that keeps these crystals in place wears off with age, "like an old Post-it note." It also can be triggered by a head injury, even a minor bump, or an ear infection, or sometimes just being tilted back in the dentist's chair for too long. While it is uncomfortable, the biggest danger is an increased risk of falling because you feel so dizzy.

Treatment of BPPV:

Unfortunately, many patients with BPPV see numerous doctors and go through many unnecessary tests before finding relief. Partly that is because dizziness is a complex problem and may be from several different causes, medications, low blood pressure, as well as many inner ear disorders. The symptoms can sometimes go away on their own in days to weeks; however, there is an easy fix for those cases that do not get better or to help you

feel better sooner. Doctors who do not recognize the condition or who write it off to just part of aging may prescribe medication, like meclizine, but this is an ineffective treatment for BPPV as this only treats the symptoms not the cause of BPPV.

The most effective treatments are called canalith repositioning maneuvers where the patient's head is turned while he or she sits and then lies in different positions. It generally takes five minutes or less to reposition the displaced crystal(s) back into place, and it immediately cures vertigo in about 90 percent of people. In other cases, it can be effectively treated through several sessions of these maneuvers. Aquacare Physical Therapy has Certified Vestibular Rehabilitation Therapists trained by the American Institute of Balance that are able to Diagnose BPPV and determine the correct canalith repositioning maneuver to get rid of your symptoms. If you are experiencing frequent falls, loss of balance, or dizziness, consider a free consultation or evaluation with one of our certified balance/vestibular therapists. Feel free to call 302 491-4196.



POLICE & FIRE





BY BETSY PRICE

A task force has laid out a 10-point plan to address the membership crisis among volunteer fire departments threatening fire protection throughout Delaware.

“The men and women of Delaware’s volunteer fire service make a difference in the lives of Delawareans every day,” said Warren Jones, executive manager of the Delaware Volunteer Firefighters Association. “We hope more people will see the need to serve their communities and join this great group of dedicated individuals. We are looking forward to the task force’s recommendations to turn the tide in the decline in volunteerism.”

“The decline in new volunteers is alarming, as Delaware’s firefighters provide an invaluable service to our communities,” said Sen. Brian Pettyjohn, a member of the task force and Senate minority whip.

“The safety of our constituents depends on a healthy and robust volunteer firefighting network,” he said. “The recommendations from the Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment and Retention Task Force aim to increase volunteerism and deserve further consideration. I look

TEN IDEAS TO BOLSTER DELAWARE’S VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANIES

(Photo by Matt Chesin on Unsplash)

forward to working with the task force’s chairs, elected officials and organizations such as the Delaware Volunteer Firefighters Association in achieving that goal.”

“The wall that has protected Delaware families for generations is being threatened by apathy and neglect as our volunteer fire companies struggle to recruit new members and raise the public donations they depend on for their very survival,” said Sen. Bruce Ennis, co-chair of the task force and a life member of Citizens’ Hose Company No. 1 in Smyrna.

- The task force, set up by the Legislature in 2019 with members from both parties and other stakeholders, came up with these ideas:
- Develop a recruitment and retention training class at the Delaware State Fire School to share best practices across departments.
- Establish an AmeriCorps Program that would assign full-time members to companies in all three counties, with stipends paid by county governments.
- Add a training administrator to the fire school to manage the AmeriCorps program.
- Expand the Sussex County Operation GEM cadet firefighter program for children 10-15 to all school districts.
- Launch a volunteer firefighter recruitment website and marketing program paid for and administered by the Delaware Volunteer Firefighters Association.

- Promote the advantages and career opportunities that come with joining volunteer fire companies to youth in Wilmington.
- Offer public safety classes in firefighting, EMT and/or EMR at Delaware’s vocational technical school districts.
- Make courses taught by the fire school eligible for college credits.
- Offer tuition reimbursement to Delaware students who volunteer with a local fire company for a set number of hours.
- Increase the for volunteer fire company members from \$400 to \$1,000.

Volunteer firefighters are in decline nationwide. Enrollment in the entry-level training course at the fire school fell to fewer than 190 in 2019—less than half the number a decade earlier.

“Delaware’s volunteer fire companies face a difficult challenge,” said State House Minority Leader Danny Short (R-Seaford) a past chief of the Seaford Fire Department. “The inability of many companies to recruit sufficient numbers of new members to their ranks has been an ongoing problem for years. I think many of the suggestions made by the task force have merit and may help to turn the tide. I look forward to further exploring them so we can maintain the historical dependability of a system protecting most Delaware communities.”

See FIRE on PAGE 30

FIRE from PAGE 29

In Delaware, 57% of fire departments are mostly volunteers, with more than 40% all-volunteer.

The majority of the firefighters who respond to emergencies up and down our state aren't paid for their services," said task force chair Larry Mitchell, a 52-year life member of the Elsmere Fire Company and the House majority whip. "These men and women do this because of a desire to serve their communities."

The task force found that most volunteer fire departments receive only a 12% response to annual fund drive campaigns.



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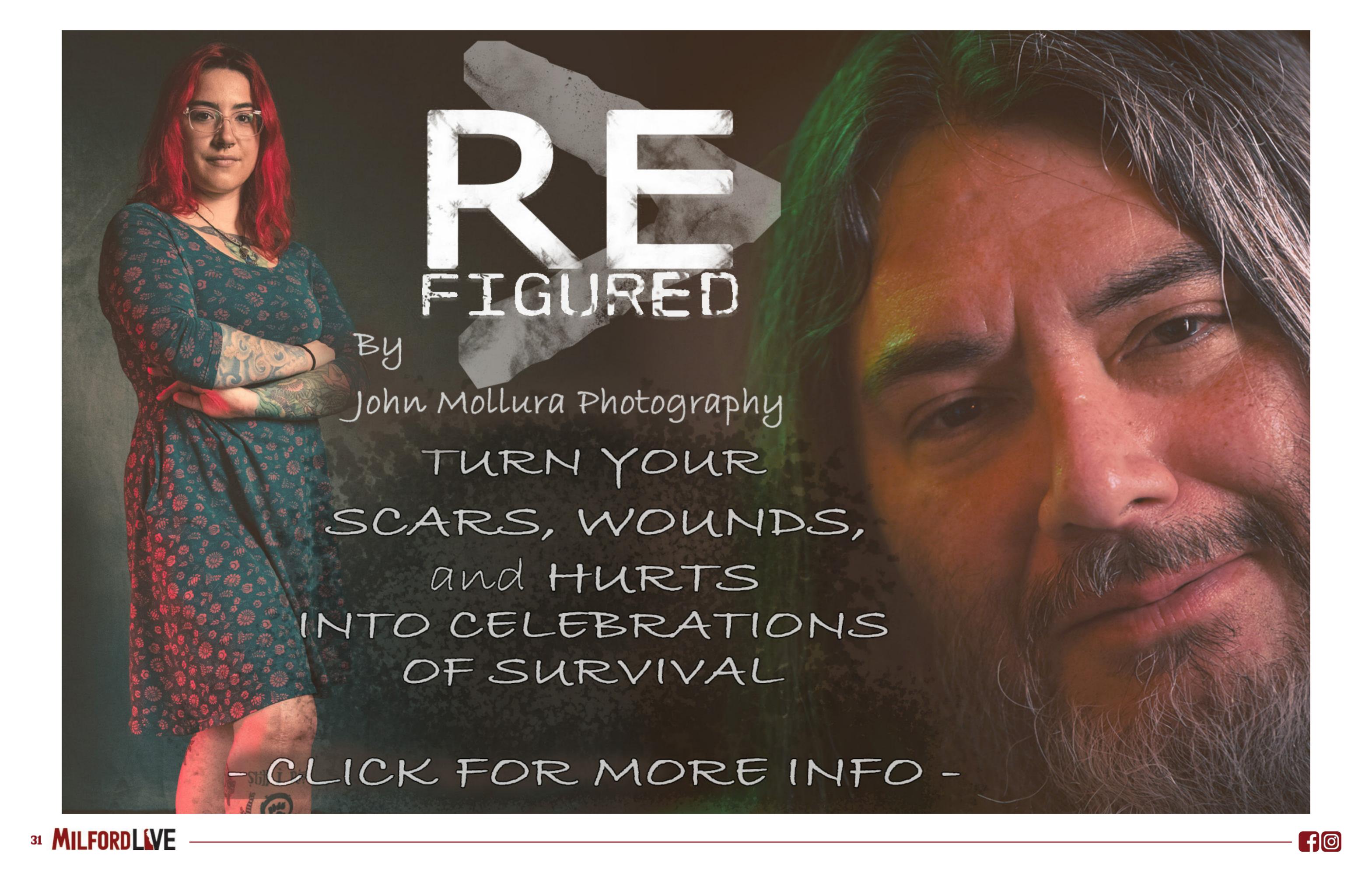
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BY KEVIN EICKMAN

Twenty!!! That's the number of players from three teams that were named to the 2021 All-State lacrosse squad. Those teams were Salesianum (8), Cape Henlopen (7), and Sanford (5). Taking that into account, that left only five spots to fill out the 25-man squad. The fact that a Milford senior, part of a team that finished 3-12, was part of the squad says an awful lot about the type of player Landan Hajek is. While this was a transitional year for the Bucs, the fact that he was recognized by the majority of coaches throughout Delaware, should tell you all you need to know about the respect Hajek gained over his three seasons at Milford.

HAJEK GARNERS ALL-STATE ACCOLADES

Looking back on the season, the game that sticks out in my mind, was Milford's final game of the year. On that senior night, Milford was battling a Sanford team, that would eventually make it to the state tournament semi-finals. The Buccaneers were outmanned and outgunned. It didn't matter to Hajek, who played from the opening whistle to the final horn all the while encouraging his teammates and recording his 100th goal as a Buccaneer. "The fact that Landan was able to get to 100 career goals, despite an entire season being canceled, says a lot about his heart. But there is so much more to him than that, it's what separates him from the rest," Milford coach Blake Faulkner continued. "He is a leader, who always seems to know how to lead, whether it is instructing a player, making sure everyone is ready or just making sure that everyone is in the right frame of mind, Landan does it. He even knows when it's time to just keep it light, have a little fun, that's very important and something you can't teach."

From Hajek's point of view, he was honored to be named to the All-State team. "It's something I have worked towards since I picked up a lacrosse stick. Not to be recognized, but to be the best player I can be. I think this award says something about the effort I put in, so I am very happy to be recognized," he said. "While it may be my name on the list, it is my teammates and coaches who helped get me there. Lacrosse is a team sport and without my teammates, I would not have achieved as much as I did."

When looking back at his time at Milford, Hajek shared a specific memory that told you how much getting better means to him. "I would go back to the playoff game in 2019 when we traveled up to Salesianum. We knew it was going to be tough and it was. They exploded out of the gate and by the time we got to halftime we were down 16-3. But we refused to quit, we didn't give up. We outscored them in the second half 5-4, we showed we could play with them, that meant an awful lot to me," Hajek said.

The most heartbreaking memory for Hajek is the season that wasn't. With the 2020 season cancelled due to COVID, Milford was unable to field the best team in the school's history. "We were so ready; we were really going to show everyone how good Milford lacrosse is capable of being. We had a bunch of juniors and seniors, who had just put together the best regular season (11-2) that anyone could remember the previous year. All the top players from that team were going to come back, then it was all taken away. It hurts, but you just can't dwell in the past," he said.

Now a Milford graduate, Hajek will be attending Arcadia (Pa.) University this fall, while majoring in business.

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PHOTO CREDIT: MATT TRUCKS

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