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**MAY 31, 2022**  
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Headlines ..... 2  
Culture..... 8  
Business .....12  
Government.....16  
Education..... 23  
Health ..... 28  
Stay Connected .....31

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MEMORIAL DAY REMEMBRANCE



SUPERHEROES TO VISIT DOWNTOWN



GREENSPACE PRESERVED

# HEADLINES



PHOTO BY RUTH HOUSTON-BEHRENS



**BY TERRY ROGERS**

After a two-year absence due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the annual Milford Memorial Day Remembrance was held on Monday at the Milford Senior Center. The event features patriotic music, presentations honoring those who gave the ultimate sacrifice for freedom and remarks from military members and local dignitaries.

“Today is not a celebration. It is a remembrance of those that gave their all,” Charles Garrod, chairman of the event, said. “Often during a speech on patriotic days like Memorial Day or Veterans Day, statistics are floated out about the total number of sacrifices over all the wars. I’m not comfortable with that. I cannot read about those numbers of military and civilian casualties without thinking of them as people. The so called numbers were someone’s parent or someone’s child. Thinking about that brings tears of sorrow but also tears of wonderful memories. And tears of loneliness that follows. And thank you all who are here today to participate honoring these great men and women.”

Garrod explained that the flag in front of the senior center was at half-mast as the United States Flag Code required that the flag be raised to full height on Memorial Day, then lowered to half-mast until noon when it would be raised to full-mast. The Milford Community Band was scheduled to appear at the event, but a large number of the group tested positive for COVID and they felt it better to cancel their appear-

## MEMORIAL DAY REMEMBRANCE HONORS THE FALLEN

ance. Instead, solos were performed by Lorraine Leavel during the ceremony. After colors were presented by the VFW Color Guard along with two Boy Scout Troops, Dr. David Perdue opened the event with a prayer followed by Mayor Archie Campbell who welcomed everyone to the service. Representatives of each branch of the service placed flowers on a wreath honoring the fallen. The guest speaker for the event was Major General Michael Berry, adjutant general of the Delaware National Guard.

“President John F. Kennedy is quoted as saying a nation reveals itself not only by the men it produces, but also by the men it honors. The man who remembers those words ring true today, and by all rights represent both men and women who wear the uniforms,” Major General Berry said. “Which leads me to reiterating the importance of what is taking place this morning. Not only here but all over our state and our nation. This ceremony is so much larger than a recognition of our fallen heroes. This ceremony is about creating a link between those members of our society who were not serving in uniform, and those that have answered the call. All of you are saying thank you for your service. And should the tragedy of last warrior occur, we the American people are here to fulfill our end of an unwritten contract. We the citizens of the United States of America are honoring a contract that we make every day as our young men and women raise their right hand and make an oath to serve and protect our citizens at home and abroad. This contract requires all of us to appreciate the risks inherent in the profession of arms. And to never forget their sacrifice especially when one of our warriors lose their lives while performing their duties.”

Major General Berry pointed out that currently, less than one half of one percent of the population serves in the Armed Forces and that percentage drops every day as the numbers of veterans in our population decrease.

“As we grow up in our society, we have an obligation to recognize just how fortunate we are to be citizens of the United States. Each of us benefits from all the freedoms

See HONOR on page 4

## HONOR from page 3

guaranteed by the Constitution, as well as the political, social and financial advantages we enjoy every day,” Major General Berry said. “Each of us has a freedom of choice, of course within the law, to set our course for our future and practice the concept of self-determination. A lot of cliches can be used when describing our society. However, the bottom line is, we are all given the choice and the tools to be a productive member of society. And it’s an individual decision as to what path we take. I can spend hours talking about civic responsibility. However, what is important today is to recognize none of these freedoms would exist without the sacrifice of our veterans and our Armed Forces and their willingness to lay down their lives in support of America’s freedom. I base this statement on the fact that with the stability provided by our own forces in a world is full of constant strife and turmoil as a country is secure in its existence.”

Rep. Charles Postles pointed out that although our democratic republic was not perfect, it was better than any other type of government that has existed.

“General Berry referred to it that we have an obligation. Yes. In this country we have rights, we have privileges, we have freedom. We also have responsibilities and obligations and to those of us who remain, and I’m particularly pleased when where there’s a good representation of young people here today, that have the responsibility to see that this country continues,” Rep. Postles said. “That we indeed strive for righteousness that we defend our liberty, and we always pursue justice. We need to remember these things because these

See HONOR on page 5



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**HONOR from page 4**

are what those you are honoring gave their life for. I do thank everyone here that has given service and encourage you to remember we have come this far, but we have more yet to go. “

Rep. Bryan Shupe used a quote from Ronald Reagan’s 1967 inaugural address as governor of California, reminding everyone that freedom is a fragile thing and that it was never more than a generation away from extinction. He also stated that our freedoms are given to us by the heroes who serve and protect us every day. Rep. Shupe remembered talking to a friend who was just back from deployment during Iraqi Freedom and recalling that he struggled with what to say to his friend, believing that his friend’s service was so much more important than what he was doing at home.

“He could see what I was getting at, what I was trying to get at and being more accustomed to my awkwardness than I was he said back to me that everyone has a purpose. So, some people know that it is their purpose to serve in the Armed Forces. And he does it so we’re freed up so that others back home can build their purpose, whatever that may be,” Rep. Shupe said. “The sacrifices that our heroes have made to protect our unalienable rights need to be honored, not just for one day, but every single day we should celebrate and honor them by building strong communities and families here at home. We all have been given a path and a gift from the Almighty and pursuing them honors the legacy of the fallen soldier. That was the larger picture that my friend wanted me to understand that his sacrifice and the sacrifices of many that did not return home were in the

**See HONOR on page 6**



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## HONOR from page 5

name of freedom, were not in name alone. It was so that we at home could pursue our destiny and live lives that would honor the sacrifices that were being made.”

Rep. Shupe challenged everyone to think about how they were living their life, to look deep inside and ask if they were living a life that gives justice to the sacrifices made by these heroes. He pointed out that people should ask if they are living for selflessness, living with courage and working for a higher purpose.

“We can honor the sacrifices by living a higher purpose once we begin to see something bigger than ourselves. This is a common thread we have with others,” Rep. Shupe said. “We can achieve enormous accomplishments in living in this way. And the freedom of this type of life is immeasurable and it’s usually been through the ultimate test and is now protected by our heroes. Our heroes are students of great discipline and selflessness, courage and living through a higher purpose. Each of us can think of a loved one who’s served. Today, let’s leave here asking ourselves, how can we do the same in our daily lives to honor their sacrifices.”

After the speeches, there was a 21-gun salute outside the senior center and the creation of the POW/MIA Fallen Comrade Table. The words to “Taps” were read and Andy Seville played the song on trumpet. Charles Hammond, who served in the United States Marine Corps, part of the committee that put together the remembrance and chairman of the Board of the Milford Senior Center, requested Chaplain Mr. Positive, a local pastor, to present a special gift to the senior center. The chaplain presented a tri-folded flag in a case to the center

as a thank you for allowing veterans to use the center.

“You cannot buy this flag,” the chaplain said. “Someone in the Armed Forces must have died for me to be able to get this flag. The fact that the senior center honors its veterans every day needs to be acknowledged. I like looking out here and seeing these young faces. All of you out there who think you are not old, you will be. It is the young who we need to listen to right now. All of you young people, step outside that box and be the change. Us older folks need to let them do that and stop saying ‘but this is how we have always done it.’ They are our future, so let’s let them build that future.”

Garrod closed the ceremony with some final words.

“There have been a lot of changes in our country. Some are good. Some not so much. But it’s consistent. The spirit of being American has not changed. Some people may feel a little snarky when we say America is the greatest country in the world. I say that that as a whole we are a moral nation,” Garrod said. “We are patriotic. We have a strong work ethic. We believe in peace. We will stand up and fight to defend our country. We have developed wonderful alliances with many nations with friendships. We can always count on. But one thing we all know is that freedom isn’t free.”



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# CULTURE



PHOTO BY VINCENT J. DESKIEWICZ SR.

# LADYBUG FESTIVAL PLANS TRIUMPHANT RETURN AFTER TWO YEARS

BY TERRY ROGERS

The very popular Ladybug Festival, an event that showcases female musical artists, will return to downtown Milford after a two-year cancellation due to the pandemic. The festival will be held throughout the downtown area on Saturday, July 30 from 2 p.m. until 9 p.m.. The event is sponsored by Downtown Milford Inc. in conjunction with Gable Entertainment.

“The bands will be staged throughout downtown with a main stage on Walnut Street and a smaller stage on the north end of Walnut Street,” Peggy Reilly, chair of the event, said. “There will also be performances at six other locations throughout the festival. We are planning on having the same if not more people attending than in 2019 when we had over 5,000.”

DMI is currently seeking vendors for the event. They do not currently have a list of bands who will attend, but there are expected to be more than 40 groups performing different genres. There will be food trucks offering a wide range of options, including some ethnic choices. Walnut Street and Park Avenue will be closed to traffic for the event. In addition, three locations on Walnut Street will sell alcohol.

“The Richard Johnson Amphitheater at the Public Library will act as a secondary main stage,” Janne Collins, executive director of DMI, said. “Live music will be staggered with no breaks in the fun. Additionally, several local businesses will be hosting live entertain-

See **LADYBUG** on page 10

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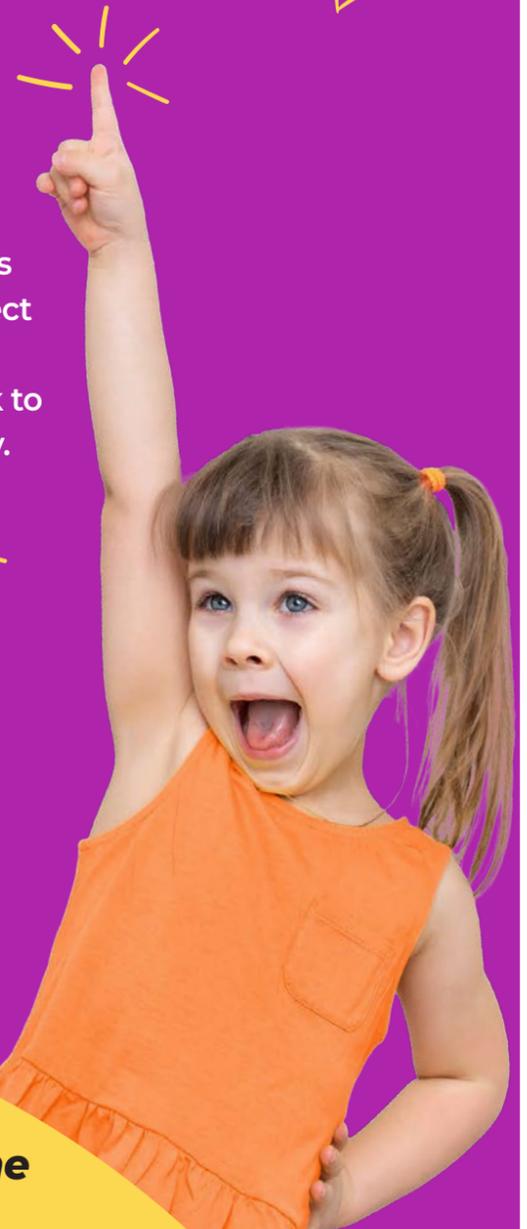
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## LADYBUG from page 9

ment during the event and those locations will be announced soon.”

Founded in 2012, the Ladybug Music Festival was originally held in Wilmington as a way to offer an alternative to Firefly, a music festival held at Dover Downs. Founders Gayle Dillman and Jeremy Hebbel of Gabel Entertainment, wanted to create a festival that focused on local, independent artist and was free to attend. Owners of Shops and Lofts in Wilmington, Michael and Debbie Schwartz, offered their location for a live block party and the Ladybug Festival was born.

“It’s so exciting to be able to continue to celebrate women in music across the state of Delaware,” Dillman said. “The feedback we got from attendees in 2019 was that Milford was such a beautiful and charming location for the event and we can’t wait to see everyone on July 30.”

The event grew to be one of the most popular in Wilmington and, in 2018, the event expanded to Milford with over 40 artists. In 2020, the event was held virtually and in 2021, a “crawl-style event was held along Market Street, but no event was held in Milford that year.

Some of the acts that have appeared at past festivals include Vanessa Carlton, Larkin Poe, Kechi Okwuchi, KT Tunstall and Keri Hilson.

“The committee has been enjoying getting ready for this fabulous event,” Reilly said. “We are looking forward to a great event and hope that Milford will come out and support these amazing women.”

Anyone interested in a vendor space or bringing a food truck should email ladybug@downtownmilford.org.



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# SUPERHEROES TO VISIT DOWNTOWN AT THE NEXT THIRD THURSDAY

have a fun activity for the kids, too.”

Throughout downtown, there will be photo stations that will allow children and adults to take photos with their favorite superhero. In addition, DMI is asking that kids from 1 to 99 dress up in their favorite superhero costume, wear a costume representing an historic superhero or simply make one up.

There will be food trucks, including ZAKKA, offering delicious Indian cuisine, Carl Haber with hot dogs and Blue Hen Concessions will be offering funnel cakes. DMI is still looking for vendors to set up along Walnut Street for the event as well. Milford Museum will be there handing out stickers and other items. Be sure to check out General Torbert who stands regally next to the museum and is one of our own local superheroes. He will also be participating in the event based on a Facebook poll the museum will release in the next week. The Milford Senior Center is also participating.

“We will have a bounce house and Watkins Wonders Petting Zoo will be downtown that night,” Collins said. “We will have face painting by Patricia Struck who has some superhero designs for the kids. The band for the evening is Verdant and they were recommended for the event.”

Anyone interested in being a vendor should contact [events@downtownmilford.org](mailto:events@downtownmilford.org).

BY TERRY ROGERS

On June 16 from 4:30 p.m. to 8 p.m., downtown Milford will be the site of a superhero gathering. Downtown Milford Inc. (DMI) and Red Bandana have partnered for the June Third Thursday event, inviting some of your favorite heroes to come into town and see what Milford has to offer.

“I would really hate for our local superheroes to be left out, so I have contacted some local businesses to see if they would be interested in joining the superheroes,” Miranda Collins, events coordinator for DMI, said. “Milford Library and Milford Police have agreed to represent our local heroes that night and we hope to see heroes from the school district, fire department, Bayhealth and post office as well. Evolve Fitness will



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# BUSINESS



Q2 PHOTO BY MARCIA REED



# NEW HISTORY, ECO-TOUR WILL FOCUS ON MISPELLION RIVER'S IMPORTANCE

“Each venue will have their own talking points,” she said. “We have two Ford Transit shuttles, one seats 14 and one 11. We will meet at the museum for a guided tour and talk along the Riverwalk and around the museum. There will be free time for lunch before we drive to the Dupont Nature Center and, last but not least, to Abbott’s Mill for a mill tour.”

At the Milford Museum, guests will hear about the river and how it has changed over the years. “We will talk about the importance of the river in the town’s commerce and industry over time, especially the shipbuilding industry,” said Nicole Rogers, operations manager at the Milford Museum. “We also talk about the Native Americans who called the area home before the first settlers arrived in Milford.

“This is a fun, casual tour that will not only be informative, but will give those on the tour a new appreciation of the Mispillion River.”

After lunch, which is not included in the tour price, guests will go to the DuPont Nature Center, where Lynne Pusey said it is excited to be part of the new tour.

“The DuPont Nature Center is located at the mouth of the Mispillion River, where it empties into the Delaware Bay,” she said. “Many of the ships that were historically built in downtown Milford were brought out to the bay using the Mispillion River.” Participants will learn additional information about the historical importance of the Mispillion River and the unique natural ecology of the Mispillion Harbor, which is known for the large numbers of spawning horseshoe crabs and migratory shorebirds that visit each spring, she said.

“The nature center provides an excellent view of the Mispillion Harbor from its observation deck and includes exhibits dedicated to the natural history and ecology of the Mispillion Harbor and the Delaware Bay,” she said.

Guests will be given a brief presentation when they arrive and then be allowed to

**BY TERRY ROGERS**

A new six-hour Sussex County history and eco-tour will give guests a look at the Dupont Nature Center, the Milford Museum, Abbott’s Mill Nature Center and the history of the Mispillion River, which connects them all. **Delmarva Discovery Tours** of Milford has teamed up with those groups and Chamber of Commerce for Greater Milford to offer a unique tour that allows guests a view of the Delaware’s southernmost county.

The tour includes transportation from/to the beach and within a 20-mile radius of Milford, with stops at the three venues for guided experiences. It’s designed for families, small groups, people who love history, birders, small town lovers, those with a shipbuilding interest, day trippers, kids, grandparents—and even people new to the Sussex County area, which is one of Delaware’s fastest-growing population centers. Janis Markopolous of Delmarva Discovery Tours said the eco-tour is partly a collaborative effort to drive more tourism to Milford by focusing on the Mispillion River.

See **ECO-TOUR** on page 14

## ECO-TOUR from page 13

explore the exhibits and aquariums in the center and take some time to view the Mispillion Harbor.

The final stop on the tour will be Abbott's Mill Nature Center. According to Stephen Childers, the experience there will be similar to what the organization offers monthly to the public.

"I'll explain how a mill like Abbott's would have operated and its historical significance and I'll operate the millstones using the water powered turbine as we don't actually grind any grain," Childers said. "We will do our best to also have our huge Fairbanks-Morse diesel engine running and operating the roller mills. Because I depend on volunteers to run the engine, this may not be possible on every tour. Every family will get a hand-out that further explains how the mill operated."

The tour price varies depending on the pickup site. It's \$49 for those meeting guides in Milford; \$59 for those being transported from Lewes, Rehoboth and Dewey; and \$69 for those being transported from Bethany, Millville, Oceanview and Fenwick. That price does not include tips or lunch.

The tour is offered on Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. during June, July, August and September. The minimum group size for the tour will be seven to eight people; maximum will be 25. Children younger than five are not allowed in the grain mill. Comfortable walking shoes and sunscreen are recommended.

Delmarva Discovery Tours also offers brewery tours, winery tours, farm tours, antiquing tours and more. For additional information, call 302-260-9008 or go to [www.delmarvadiscoverytours.com](http://www.delmarvadiscoverytours.com).



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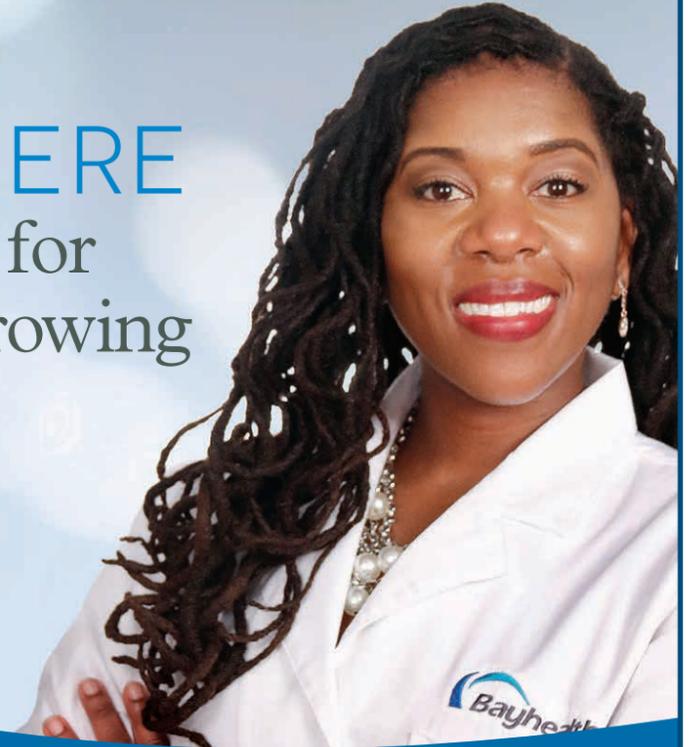
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# GOVERNMENT & POLITICS



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# BUDGET

## HEARINGS PROVIDE INSIGHT INTO FY2022-23 BUDGET

BY TERRY ROGERS

Over three nights, Milford City Council reviewed the FY2022-23 budget with presentations from various department heads regarding revenue and expenditures. The total balanced budget is \$52,858,538. Much of the increase in the budget was related to personnel costs as vacant positions are filled in various departments. The budget also includes \$2.6 million not spent in the FY2022 budget. About \$200,000 of the budget was covered by American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA funds).

“I think there are a couple of issues moving forward,” Mark Whitfield, city manager, said. “I should say we’re dependent upon bond bill money and other grant money for some of the projects. And one of the things I need input from council on when we get to that part is if you see projects that are slated for funding to be from other sources that are a high priority, and you really

want to see those done, you need to let us know because we need to shift some things around to make sure we get the priorities that you want in terms of capital projects. The other issue that we have is just the bandwidth of our staff of carrying out all these projects. I’m not keen on adding additional staff to see all these get done, but I think we have to be realistic in terms of what a few people have the time to be able to do to carry out all these projects. So again, your priorities are something that I really would like to hear on capital and on the employment side. We have some challenges, and we continue to look at how best to fill those positions.”

Last year, council approved a small tax increase that would allow the city to reduce its dependency on realty transfer tax (RTT) funds that had previously been used

See **BUDGET** on page 18



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**BUDGET from page 17**

to balance the budget. The goal was to reduce the use of RTT funding by \$100,000 each year over three years. Councilman Jason James asked if the tax increase resulted in more revenue than \$100,000 per year, could the city reduce its use of RTT funds sooner. City Finance Manager Lou Vitola explained that if the tax revenue yielded more than \$100,000 in one year, it was possible that the amount of RTT funds used to balance the budget could be reduced, but that it should be completely eliminated in three years. Councilman Andy Fulton asked if the reassessment of property in Kent and Sussex County would increase revenue for Milford.

“It shouldn’t, but it depends on how we treat the change in assessed value when Kent and Sussex are complete with the reassessments,” Vitola said. “If Kent and Sussex both reassess at levels that are twice current levels and our property tax receipts therefore double, we will cut the rate in half such that revenue does not increase. There’s state law in effect where we can’t increase more than 15%.”

Under the IT Department, Councilman Fulton asked if the proposal for the city to offer internet service to residents would fall under his budget and he explained that it would be a combination. Whitfield commented that a study to determine the feasibility of offering internet service was included in the Capital Improvement Plan, also included as part of the budget. City Planner Rob Pierce was asked by Councilman Todd Culotta if his budget included enough personnel to keep up with building code enforcement.

**See BUDGET on page 19**



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**BUDGET from page 18**

“Yeah, I think burden over the last couple of years was more the building permits and keeping up with those components and licensing. Since we brought in a second permit technician, it reduced the burden on the other permit technician, and we are able to keep up with more of the administrative work. That was kind of where the logjam was, to be honest with you. The code officials were keeping up with their end but permitting and licensing was really the heavy workload in the office.”

When council discussed the Capital Improvement Plan portion of the budget, several items were discussed. The city is looking into repairing several bridges in town and doing some streetscaping in the downtown area. The city is seeking a grant to install two public restrooms downtown and the CIP also includes several parking lot upgrades as well as an upgrade to the front of City Hall. Parks and Recreation Director Brad Dennehy reported that one of the goals for his department was the acquisition of more land that would be used as park land and to focus on beautification of Milford. Dennehy explained that these focuses were the result of a recent citizen’s survey that pointed out residents are looking for more recreational activities and that they would like to see downtown Milford look more beautiful. Councilman James asked if Dennehy had the staff to handle new parkland adequately.

“To be honest Councilman James, over the next fiscal year, I would definitely like to see a full-time gardener come on board,” Dennehy said. “I’d like to see some commendable growing and I think we could do a lot better job of we’re looking forward down the track.

**See BUDGET on page 20**



Milford School District  
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2022-2023 School Year

March 10 (Thursday)	4:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
March 14 (Monday)	8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
March 29 (Tuesday)	4:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
April 6 (Wednesday)	4:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
April 12 (Tuesday)	4:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
May 4 (Wednesday)	4:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
May 19 (Thursday)	4:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
June 1 (Wednesday)	4:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
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- Immunization (shot) record
- Physical Exam
- Tuberculosis Risk Assessment or PPD results
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\*Please note: Any family who is interested in being considered for the 2022-2023 Spanish Immersion Program lottery will need to register on or before June 7<sup>th</sup>. Any late registrants will be added to the waiting list.

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We're going to absolutely try to implement the purchase the 200 acres that we're looking at and all the activities that could be put in place. That's a long range plan of land acquisition."

The longest discussion during the budget hearings were on the final night when council looked at the City Hall portion. The budget includes increases to Downtown Milford Inc. for the Ladybug Festival and the Chamber of Commerce for Greater Milford for the Riverwalk Festival. In addition, both the Milford Library and the Milford Museum will receive increases they requested. However, Carlisle Fire Company requested \$217,000 in this year's budget, but only \$140,000 was allotted. Whitfield explained that the budget did include a tax incentive for fire company members who lived in the city as a way to encourage volunteers and to improve response times.

"I fully support the incentive for anything that's related to getting better response into the city for the sake of all of our citizens and I know that the fire department did come and ask for a meaningful increase from the \$140,000," Councilman Fulton said. "Before this budget is done, before council makes a decision, I am not opposed to an increase to the fire company, but I know firsthand what our greatest needs are and I'm trying to get the fire company to acknowledge, to verbally commit to the reality that we don't currently have the personnel to improve response time to save lives and property from fire or who needs EMS. I would like for council to at least think about it because it's really important."

Councilman Culotta agreed with Councilman Fulton. "The Fire Department is obviously volunteer for the most part and yes, I agree with you, I don't necessarily want to increase because everything's gone up operationally," Councilman Culotta said. "We know that the volunteer firefighter has become a thing of the past. So, our concern is trying to put incentives in to keep pushing off the need for a full-time fire department and a tax increase, so I am all about that. Do we have any details on what we are saving with a volunteer fire company?" Whitfield stated that when they last contracted with the fire department, it was determined the volunteer company saved \$30 a year in property taxes.

Councilman Michael Boyle pointed out that council had that discussion with the fire company last time they were in front of them and that it was almost as if the representatives were afraid to admit they were struggling with staffing.

"There's towns smaller than Milford that have a hybrid type of relationship, with a city budget smaller than ours, that are actually paying for some of the benefits wages because of this type of thing," Councilman James said. "There's no reason why Milford can't do it as there are plenty of models already out there."

Councilman Culotta suggested a workshop where council could discuss the needs of the fire company with members, not just with the company leadership. He felt it might be beneficial to talk with younger members as well as older members to see what the needs were and where the city could help. Councilman Dan

Marabello suggested that the city begin to create a reserve fund that could be in place should the need arise to shift to a fully paid department.

"I don't disagree, and I think we need to have more dialogue," Whitfield said. "We also need to understand what their needs are and how can we help them. Not just giving an increased dollar amount, but how can we give them more money that is going to meet our objectives."

Council will approve the budget next month.



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**PLAN from page 21**

Street and South Walnut to allow for two-way traffic. We then wanted to investigate alternatives for the Canterbury Road and Airport Road intersection to improve safety for vehicles and other modes of transportation and investigate potential improvements to the Jefferson Avenue and South Walnut Street intersection to improve vehicle and pedestrian movements around the existing railroad crossing.”

Pierce stated that the state looked upon this change favorably as it shows the city’s intent to coordinate with the state agencies on the implementation and study of those particular transportation priorities. Councilman Brian Baer asked if there was a plan to put in an alternate truck route on Route 14. Pierce stated that there were limits on trucks on Churchill Road but at the present time, there was no plan to establish truck restrictions in Milford.

There was no public comment during that portion of the meeting and council approved the change to the 2018 Comprehensive Plan with a vote of seven to zero.

“I vote yes,” Councilwoman Nirmala Samaroo said. “It is a great way for families to have outdoor activities.”



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# EDUCATION



# MILFORD MIDDLE SCHOOL PROJECT MOVES FORWARD



BY TERRY ROGERS

With the Milford School Board approving the bid from BSA+A for architectural engineering services for the remodeling of the Milford Middle School on Lakeview Avenue, the project has moved one step farther toward completion. BSA+A will lead the processes for developing the design and site plan for the project.

“We will be collaborating with BSA+A and our construction management team throughout the design processes,” Trish Gerken, public information officer, said. “We will be meeting soon with BSA+A and our construction management team to discuss timelines, next steps and site prep. BSA+A will assist us in gathering input from various stakeholders of our district community to finalize a design and site plan.”

Public meetings will be held to solicit community input throughout the design and site plan process, Gerken explained. The meetings will be advertised and communicated so that there can be significant involvement from the community. As the project phases

continue, the district plans to communicate a timeline and the next steps for the project.

“We remain committed to transparency throughout the process and will maintain communication with the community throughout the completion of the process,” Dr. Sara Croce, chief financial officer, said. “We are still in the early stages of confirming our plans. We will provide updates throughout the design, site prep and construction aspects of the project.”

Part of the communication to the public will include anticipated time periods for site preparation work and demolition. During public meetings held prior to a referendum that passed in October, an independent engineering firm inspected the building thoroughly and found that the older, original portion of the school, built in the 1920s, could be salvaged although it would need significant work done to the interior. The newer wings added over the years had deteriorated to the point they needed to be demolished. However, the building could be configured so that new wings could be added that would allow the building to keep its original appearance.

The building does have historic benefit to the city as it was the original Milford High School. It was the school briefly attended by the Milford Eleven, the first black students who attempted to integrate the district in 1954. The Milford Seven were successful in integrating the same building a decade later. Many community meetings were held before the referendum and the public overwhelmingly requested that the building remain a

school. The district’s referendum approved the project which will create a school for grades five and six.

“We look forward to the design process,” Dr. Kevin Dickerson, superintendent, said. “We are excited that we will soon be gathering input from our school staff and community. Input from our district community is critically important to the success of the project so that we can best serve our students and entire district community.”

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**BY TERRY ROGERS**

At a recent meeting, Dr. Kevin Dickerson, superintendent of Milford School District, provided the board with information on two sidewalk projects the district may partner with the city to upgrade as well as details on the contract for school resource officers (SRO) used by the district.

“We do have one project here with 10th Street that goes kind of behind Milford High School and behind Briggs Stadium. If you notice, the sidewalk kind of ends before you get to that parking lot behind the stadium,” Dr. Dickerson said. “There’s also a really nice bike path and walking path behind Grotto’s and that whole facility back there. We would like to work with the city to connect that walking path for safety for community residents, our school, our campus students as well if they’re ever traveling there, but we think that will be a great partnership to have with the city. And we think that will not only help just the city, but also our schools as well.”

## CITY AND DISTRICT MAY PARTNER ON SIDEWALK, SRO NEEDS

Dr. Dickerson stated that work would possibly begin on 10th Street over the summer and that the city was currently working on sketches to show what a walking and bicycle path might look like. Once the drawings were provided, he stated that information would be brought to the board regarding costs and funding.

“The other place we’re looking at or entertaining also with the city is looking at more access to the circle that’s outside of Mispillion Elementary School that would support the city,” Dr. Dickerson said. “We don’t think that provides any type of disruption to what we have there in that area. But we have those projects there. We will receive more information, and then really pictures of what this was going to look like and we’ll bring those to the board. At that time, we would have a discussion and seek approval. We just like to be able to partner with the city as we go forward on some projects that make sense to help the city and also make it a better place here for our community overall.”

After the discussion about sidewalks and paths, Dr. Dickerson provided the board with the contract for SROs for the upcoming year. He provided the contract so the board could read over it before adding it to the agenda as an action item in June.

“But I just want to go through the history of this a little bit. We had discussion before the school year began, if you remember,” Dr. Dickerson said. “We used to have three SROs in our schools throughout our district. This year we have two as the city does not have

as many officers for us to have available. Plus, the costs of the officers have risen as well. So, two years ago, we were in a situation we received three officers for \$150,000. We paid for two and received one courtesy of the city of Milford. This past year, obviously rising costs, employment costs and those type of things, we had an agreement for two officers for \$125,000. In the fall, we also then brought a constable in to MCA as well. So we have an SRO at the high school and a constable at MCA. We do still have that one officer with Mispillion and Lulu Ross, but on the secondary campus now we have an SRO at the high school and a constable in MCA. This is another increase in costs here. Just want you to be able to review it tonight.”

Dr. Dickerson reported that the SROs were going to cost the district \$86,500 per officer and that did not include other expenses like benefits. He explained that the SROs work 10 months each year and that they provide services to the city during those 10 months as well. The city also used to provide crossing guards at Banneker, Ross and Mispillion which cost \$10,000 each. The city has offered to split the cost with the district. Board member David Vezmar asked if the SROs were employees of the city or employees of the district.

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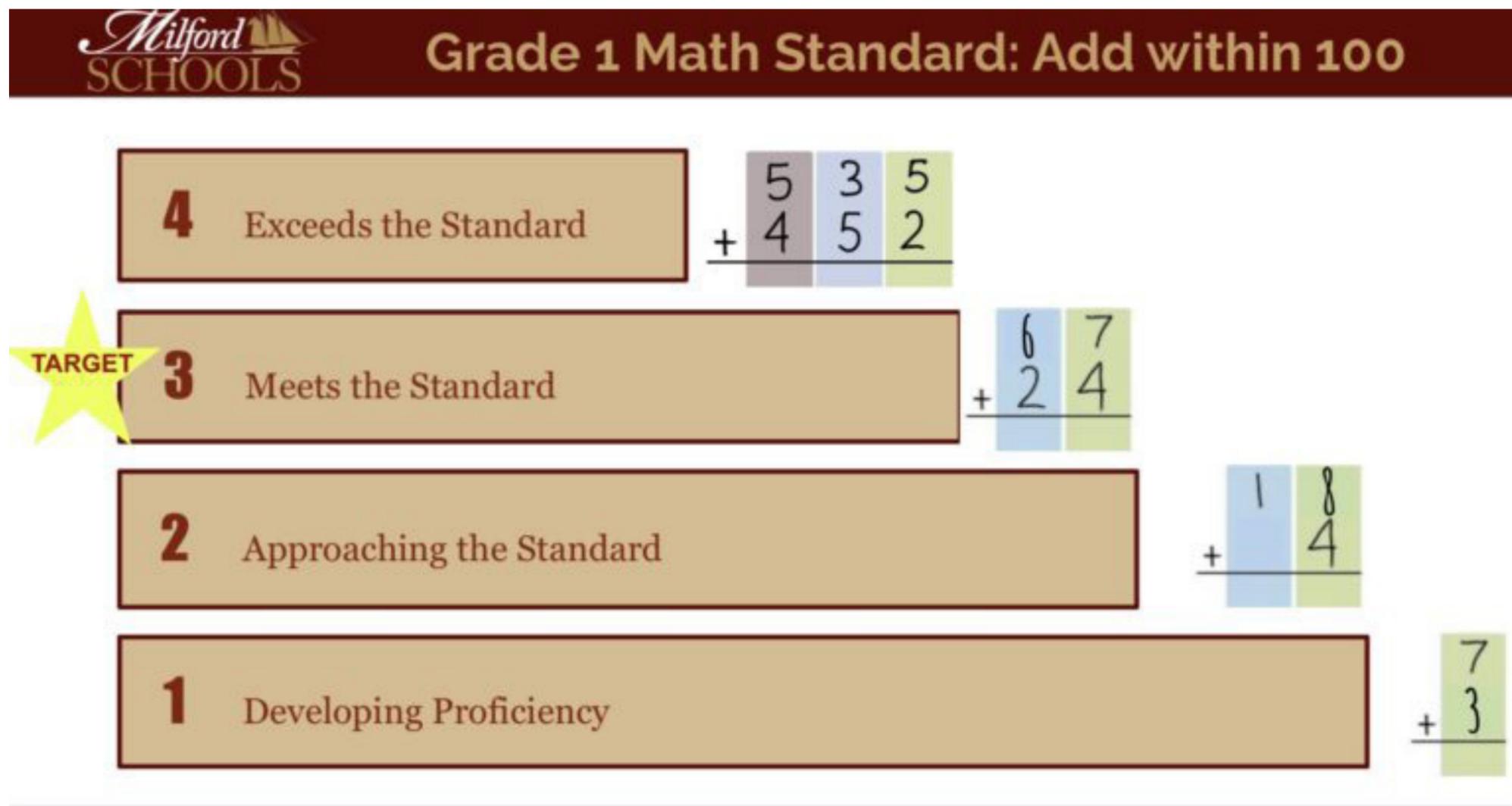
# STANDARDS-BASED REPORT CARD ROLLOUT SCALED BACK

BY TERRY ROGERS

After receiving feedback at a previous board meeting, Milford School District has decided to scale back the rollout of a new standards-based report card system. Initially, the district planned to begin using the new format for grades kindergarten through sixth but have decided to only use the system for kindergarten and first grade for the upcoming school year.

“We would look at how that would continue to roll as we move forward, and then our intent is to also bring up the board policy for a first read at the June meeting, as we look to revise the grading policy, which is indeed in need of updating as we move into the next academic year,” Dr. Bridget Amory, director of Student Learning, said. “There have been some modifications made to help with any type of clarification based on our discussion from the last meeting. We do indeed have content standards that we are instructing. We are using curriculum and instruction that is aligned to those standards, as well as offering assessments. What we are still in question is how we’re reporting that out and that goes back to the question mark around the report card.”

Dr. Amory provided the board with a visual of what



the assessments would look like, continuing the “learning to ride a bicycle” analogy she used at the last meeting. There is also now a fourth category which would indicate a student is “exceeding the standards.” She provided an example of a first grade child who would receive a “one” on their report card which meant they were able to add  $7+3$ . Approaching the standard, or a two, would indicate the child could add  $18+4$  while a three, which is meeting the standard would be a child who could add  $67+24$ . A child who is exceeding the standard would receive a four and the example shown was a child who could add  $535+452$ .

“In the traditional percentage-based grading system that we have used, students start with 100% and as they work through their assignments, their grade potentially drops from 100 as they make mistakes. With a standards-based report card, they can work kind of upward as they’re working toward that,” Dr. Amory said. “Students can see themselves making that progress as they move through the system. This is again another analogy to help with the comparison between the traditional grading. So, if you were to take your vehicle to a mechanic, and the mechanic said, ‘Hey, I’m going to

See **REPORT CARD** on page 27

## REPORT CARD from page 26

give you a score of a B-plus. What they aren't telling you is all of the details that you would see, as indicated in the standards-based report card, where you would actually see the components of each one of the pieces of your vehicle that actually need to have the work done or if there's something is performing well within your vehicle."

There is a kind of "brain fog" involved in traditional grading methods, Dr. Amory explained. A student who does well on a test but needs some work on an essay may have the same grade as someone who scored well on a test but did poorly on an essay. This can be confusing for the student to understand where they may need improvement or where they are excelling. Students with special needs who may have a 504 or an IEP as well as those who were multilanguage learners would have the same targets but their methods for achieving the target may be different. Dr. Amory explained that the piloted report cards would include the option for parents to provide feedback. She also stated that the district had worked with other districts, including Smyrna, who were using this type of report card system.

"I would like to make a quick comment. I was particularly harsh at our last meeting, and I very much appreciate the changes that you have made to this. This looks much better, at least from my personal perspective," Dr. Adam Brownstein, a member of the board, said. "If I can make one or two quick comments, where you have the yellow star with the target, I actually think this presentation is better served without those yellow stars. Because the subtle implication gets back to the

point that I was making previously, which is we want every student here to exceed the standard. We don't want every student to simply meet the standard and by labeling a "C" as the target, I don't know that that does a service to our students. And the PowerPoint would be just as easily served and the point would still be made without doing that. So that's just a construct. But that's me personally."

Dr. Brownstein also asked if it was possible for both grading methods to be used as the new method is piloted.

"My other comment is from a logistical standpoint, and again, I'm not a teacher. I don't know how difficult it's going to be. You mentioned before the teachers are starting already using this with like certain curriculums and stuff," Dr. Brownstein said. "What I see is the most robust way of delivering this is, frankly, to do both because in some ways we're already doing the legwork for that behind the scenes. For instance, the car example is fantastic, that's great. So why not give them both? Why not say you have an 89 and then this is the breakdown of good, bad, whatever and that way you're giving them both, which will then help them when they eventually transition out of this system because I do think eventually, we're going to implement this with grades K through five at some point. By them having both of those that would make any future transition more seamless because they would be used to see both of those things. It's sort of the best of both worlds. You get the number grade, but you also get the feedback and then individual category and whether or not you're meeting expectations. I don't know how much more

work that would be for teachers. And certainly, I don't want to make something onerous when it doesn't need to be. But that would be a way of splitting the difference, so to speak. So those are my thoughts. Thank you and I very much appreciate the work that you put into this in the last month to make it this way."

The new report card system for kindergarten and first grade will be brought to the June board meeting for members to have a first read of the new policy and may be added to the July meeting for adoption.

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# HEALTH



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# WITH COVID CASES RISING, PUBLIC HEALTH RECOMMENDS MASKING INDOORS

BY BETSY PRICE

The number of daily COVID-19 cases has risen in the last month from 157 per day to 547, the Delaware Division of Public Health reported two weeks ago. Those cases are the ones they know about. Many people are testing positive at home and not reporting it.

While the number of cases are rising, the number of hospitalizations and deaths are significantly lower than the winter surge, which saw thousands of new cases per day with hospitals strained to handle patients and businesses struggling with sick or quarantined workers.

Because of the spring rise, Public Health is encouraging people to wear masks in public indoor areas, and to be vaccinated and boosted.

“Staying up to date with your vaccinations is the best way to ensure your body is prepared to fight against severe cases of COVID-19,” a Public Health press release said. The state said May 21 that:

- Delaware has seen 271,294 cases reported since March 11, 2020.
- The seven-day daily average of new positive cases as of May 26 was 574.7, up 417.6 since April 22
- The seven-day daily average for the percentage of total positive tests: 19.0 percentage points, up 11.4

since April 22

- Hospitalizations are at 127 with 13 critically ill
- There have 2,939 Delawareans die from COVID, up 43 since last month
- Of the recently dead, nine were reported deaths and 34 came from reviews of vital statistics records

Public Health offered stats showing that most people who got ill or were hospitalized had not had a COVID vaccine booster shot. From May 9–May 15, the state saw 3,464 new cases reported. Of those, 2,406 had not been boosted, which is 69%. There were 179 people hospitalized and 127 of those had not been boosted, which is 71%. It also said five people died that week and three were not boosted.

Public Health also reported these vaccination rates, based on data from the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention:

- Delawareans 5+ are fully vaccinated: 73.6%
- Delawareans 12+ are fully vaccinated: 77.8%
- Delawareans 18+ are fully vaccinated: 79.3%
- Delawareans who are fully vaccinated: 69.5%

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# SURVIVING BREAST CANCER

BY TERRY ROGERS

A breast cancer diagnosis is frightening. Even though treatments have come a long way and breast cancer caught early has a very high survival rate, when you receive the diagnosis, hearing the words are traumatizing to anyone. That is why Delaware Breast Cancer Coalition (DBCC) offers a wide range of survivorship programs designed to help newly diagnosed patients as well as programs for long-time survivors.

“When you are first diagnosed with breast cancer, one of the things that can help you remain positive is to talk to someone who has been in your shoes,” Mackenzie Blithe, communications and marketing assistant, said. “Beginning Your Pink Ribbon Journey is a free class for any newly diagnosed breast cancer patient and their loved ones. We also offer Peer Mentor Support for Breast Cancer. This program connects DBCC Certified Peer Mentors someone who was a similar age and had a similar diagnosis, treatment, surgery and lifestyle with someone who is newly diagnosed. The peer can then provide free, one-on-one support throughout the new patient’s cancer journey.”

Because keeping active can help improve the chances of survival after a breast cancer diagnosis, DBCC also offers a wide range of activities designed to keep people active. Nurture with Nature brings survivors together to experience nature by hiking, biking, kayaking, astronomy, horseback riding and more. It may just be a walk along the beach or a stroll through a local forest, but Blithe explained that enjoying the great outdoors not only allows survivors to connect, but it also helps relieve stress and has been shown to improve recovery. The group holds a monthly event as well as a weekly nature photo challenge.

“We also have Yes2Health, which is a free, 12-week program featuring weekly virtual or in-person meet-ups,” Blithe said. “The meetings are open to the public and include fitness, health and wellness education designed to help people live an active and healthy lifestyle. The best thing is that the target audience for this group is not just breast cancer survivors. It is also open to those who are at risk for breast cancer or other cancers, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, high cholesterol, pre-diabetics and diabetics as well as those with a body mass index of 30 or more.”

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