

MILFORD LIVE

photo link:Abbott's Mill Nature Center

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April 11, 2023
Vol. 13 • Issue 15

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Elzey Running for School Board



Southern States Request Approved



Pop Warner Season a Success

HEADLINES



photo link: Scott Evers



BY TERRY ROGERS

On May 9, Milford School District residents will go to the polls to vote for open seats on school board. Currently, only one seat, representing the district At-Large, has more than one candidate. A seat in District A, vacated when current President Jason Miller did not file for reelection, currently has only one candidate, Victor “Butch” Elzey. Dinae Woodside filed to run but withdrew her candidacy on March 10. Although he is running unopposed, Elzey answered questions about what his

ELZEY RUNNING FOR SCHOOL BOARD

vision was for the district and what he hoped to accomplish as a school board member. The questions and answers are posted in their entirety with no editing.

Candidate Background

I graduated Milford High School in 1972. I’ve lived in Milford for 68 years. I have two sons. I had my own business for 43 years painting heavy equipment and selling equipment. My wife and I also had Troops BBQ & Catering, which was very, very successful. In our BBQ business, all First Responders and military ate for free. I was involved in Little League for four years and president for two years. I organized a food drive during Katrina and went to Ocean Springs, MS, with 60,000 pounds of food. I drove down with my truck and borrowed a trailer from my good friend, Howard Burris, of Burris Foods. I then organized a group called Delaware Community Appreciation Group, and in six years we raised over \$250,000 and did a BBQ every Father’s Day at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. At Christmas, my wife and I went back over every year and did an event for them. I’m very passionate about our children, our military and our pets.

Q. Why did you decide to run for school board?

A. Well I didn’t wake up one morning and say, ‘Oh, I’m running for school board!’ I bumped into a friend of mine at Grotto’s that I hadn’t seen in quite a while. I asked her how she was doing and if she was still teaching. She said, ‘I hate teaching!’ After that, I talked to many,

See **ELZEY** on page 4

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many teachers. I've lived here for 68 years, I know a lot of people and I was getting the same response from most of the teachers I spoke to. Then I talked to many parents, and basically the same response. Their children aren't learning and there is no discipline in the school. Most important of all, I talked to many children, which I know many, many of our children, and I was getting the same responses from the children that classes are being disrupted and the children aren't learning anything. Also, I don't get involved in anything unless I think I can make a difference, and one needs to be made here! I believe that the school board of directors should be a voice for the teachers, the parents and the children. Our teachers think their hands are tied because there is no discipline in the Milford School District, and their opinions and circumstances aren't taken into consideration when a problem arises.

Q. How will you help Milford become a more successful and desired district in Delaware?

A. Discipline and accountability!

Q. School districts across the country have been issuing restrictions regarding what is taught in the classroom, especially with respect to historical and contemporary conditions in the United States. How will you handle requests for curriculum changes from parents in the community?

A. We have to listen to the parents. These children are not ours. They belong to the parents. It doesn't matter what side of the aisle you are on, we must listen to the parents and make our judgments together as a school board, with the kids' best interest at heart.

Q. Do you anticipate policing of the arts and literature that students are assigned or create? How far do you feel the First Amendment extends to students?

A. The First Amendment is the First Amendment, that can't be changed. But if somebody wants to speak out, whether it's a student, a parent or a teacher, they have a right to speak...with respect!

Q. Do you anticipate any political group, lobbyist or business influencing decisions you make as a board member?

A. Ain't no way on God's green Earth! I've already been contacted by the NAACP, the ACLU and the League of Women Voters, along with several other groups. They all have an agenda. The only agenda I have is to see to it that our children get a fair deal and a proper education, which is NOT happening now!

Q. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many parents were angry at school boards for following mandates issued by the governor. What is your opinion on governmental mandates and how school boards should handle them in the future?

A. A mandate is not a law. You have to agree with a mandate before you follow it. The teacher's union is one of the biggest problems we have in the United States. The head of the teacher's union, nationally, Randy Weingarden, makes a half a million dollars a year. Where does that money come from? You and me! And they locked our schools down and kept our children out.

See ELZEY on page 5

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CAREER FAIRS

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Q. As a board member, you will likely approve the final plans for the former Milford Middle School renovation. What will you be looking for in the renovation plan and what would you not want to see included?

A. I think that's a very hard question. I would have to see the plan, discuss the plan with the rest of the school board and probably city officials.

Q. What types of activities would you like to see offered to students to keep them active and learning when school is not in session?

A. Sports, of course, and various clubs that the school could provide.

Q. Teachers are expressing concerns that discipline policies are causing issues in the classroom with student attendance dropping, tardiness rising and what appears to be a lack of disrespect toward authority. As a board member, how do you plan to address some of these complaints from teachers?

A. If there is a child disrupting the classroom day after day that's causing the teachers not able to teach and the children not learning, something needs to be done with that child to be put in another room with supervision, and it needs to be *strictly* enforced.

Q. There is a significant teacher and substitute teacher shortage throughout the state currently. What ideas do you have to encourage people to enter the teaching or substitute teaching profession?

A. *Bring back discipline and have it be allowed and enforced!* Teachers are *not* going to put up with what is going on right now in the classroom.

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CULTURE



Photo link: Downtown Milford Inc.

MILFORD LIBRARY RELEASES APRIL EVENT INFORMATION

BY TERRY ROGERS

The Milford Public Library recently released information on programs they will offer to the public during the month of April. The programs range from information about computers and smartphones to information about history in Milford.

“We will be celebrating National Library Week from April 23 through April 29 with several events,” Carolyn Tabor, program coordinator, said. “That week will have a new book giveaway. We will celebrate Library Worker’s Day on April 26. We have a contest entitled ‘I Love My Library because...’ and all you need to do is fill out a form and be entered for a \$5 gift card. Be sure to ask about ‘All That and A Bag of Chips’ where you can get a free bag of chips when you check out with books.”

Every Thursday from 2 to 4 p.m., starting March 30 and running through April 27, the library offers a basic crocheting class. Starting April 20 and running through April 29, the library will host “Jewelry and Vintage Books” in the Smith Conference Room on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. This program will have books from the mid-1800s through the 1960s, Delaware and regional books, first editions and other rare finds. There will also be old and new jewelry as well as antique items available for sale.

“Unfortunately, we do not take credit or debit cards for the book and jewelry event,” Tabor said. “We ask that anyone who wishes to purchase please pay in cash

See **LIBRARY** on page 8



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or by check. We will be open on April 29 during the Bug and Bud Festival.”

On April 12, the library will host “We Have an App for That Assistance.” This program offers assistance downloading and learning how to use different library apps as well as Flipster, Kanopy, Hoopla and Libby. On April 14, the library will offer a shredding event in the Washington Street parking lot. Bring any documents you want to shred to the library for added security.

“PACE Your Life will be here on April 25 in the Lions Room B,” Tabor said. “Rebecca Bonawitz will provide information on how to prevent falls in your home from 3 to 5 p.m..”

Also on April 25, a video interview by Tom Summers featuring Charles Hammond, president of the Milford Museum Board, entitled “The Other Side of the Tracks 2.” A concert by “Irvin Cowboy” is planned for 6 p.m. on April 25 in the Main Library. Line Dancing with Lisa will take place on April 27 from 6 to 6:45 p.m. in the Lions Room. The cost is \$5 per class and there are additional classes available on Thursdays through May 18.

All programs require registration and additional events may be posted on the library Facebook page. Visit their website at <https://milford.lib.de.us> to register or obtain more information.



PACE Is The Place For Me! Hear what PACE Your LIFE participants are saying!



"Since I have enrolled, I have become more lively and social. I like everything about PACE, especially the people and the food!" ~ Theresa Shaffer

"Before enrolling in PACE Your LIFE I was depressed. Now I love to mingle with the participants and help them enjoy themselves." ~ Ed Darling

"My days before PACE Your LIFE were terrible. I was home alone all day. Now I tell people there is nothing else like PACE." ~ Ronnie Armstrong



PACE Your LIFE is a comprehensive medical and social program for residents in Milford as well as surrounding towns, who are 55 and older and need assistance with activities of daily living but want to age in place and remain in their home. Learn more today by scanning the QR Code! →



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USPS CELEBRATES SPRING WITH TULIP BLOSSOMS FOREVER STAMPS



STAFF REPORT

The U.S. Postal Service recognizes Americans’ love for tulips with the release of the Tulip Blossoms Forever stamps. A dedication ceremony for the stamps was held today at the Wooden Shoe Tulip Festival in Woodburn, OR.

“A gift of tulips can convey an array of meanings—love, friendship, gratitude and congratulations—just as these tulip-themed stamps make a perfect accessory to any mailing,” said Linda Malone, USPS engineering systems vice president, who served as the dedicating official.

Americans love tulips, but these spectacular flowers have roots in Central Asia. Traded along the Silk Road, they were first cultivated in 10th-century Persia and, by the 16th century, were all the rage in Constantinople (now Istanbul, Turkey). In fact, “tulip” derives from a Turkish version of the Persian word for “turban,” an allusion to the flower’s shape. After diplomats in Constantinople shipped bulbs home to western Europe, the

Dutch developed effective ways to cultivate and market the flower. The tulip trade remains an important part of their nation’s economy 400 years later.

Dutch immigrants brought tulip bulbs to America, perhaps as early as the 1600s. The flower has become a dazzling part of the landscape here, and the United States now imports more than 1 billion bulbs per year. Tulips can be grown in most of the country, outside of the Deep South, and gardeners can choose among thousands of varieties.

Greg Breeding, an art director for USPS, designed the stamps with existing photographs by Denise Ippolito. Ippolito photographed the 10 different tulips in gardens and parks she encountered while traveling. A single flower, shot in close-up, fills almost the entire frame of each stamp, with just the top of the stem showing. The tulips are various shades of yellow, orange, pink, green and violet.

See USPS on page 10

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USPS from page 9

Tulip Blossoms will be issued as Forever stamps in booklets of 20, as well as coils of 3,000 and 10,000. News of the Tulip Blossoms stamps is being shared with the hashtag #TulipBlossomsStamps.

Customers may purchase stamps and other philatelic products through the Postal Store at usps.com/shop-stamps, by calling 844-737-7826, by mail through USA Philatelic and at Post Office locations nationwide.

The United States Postal Service is an independent federal establishment, mandated to be self-financing and to serve every American community through the affordable, reliable and secure delivery of mail and packages to nearly 165 million addresses six and often seven days a week. Overseen by a bipartisan Board of Governors, the Postal Service is implementing a 10-year transformation plan, Delivering for America, to modernize the postal network, restore long-term financial sustainability, dramatically improve service across all mail and shipping categories and maintain the organization as one of America's most valued and trusted brands.

The Postal Service generally receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

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BUSINESS



Photo link: Marcia Reed

COUNCIL APPROVES SOUTHERN STATES REQUEST FOR COMP PLAN CHANGE

BY TERRY ROGERS

A recent zoning change that will also change the comprehensive plan was approved by Milford City Council at a recent meeting. The request was made by Southern States in order to allow them to build a second building on the north side of Milford Harrington Highway.

“The new building would be caddy-corner from the current Southern States location,” Cliff Mumford, an engineer with Davis, Bowen & Friedel, said. “Southern States has owned this property since 1999 and they’ve had an eye on growing in Milford. As we all know, they have been part of the Milford community for many years and they intend to expand their services by investing in a new retail sales building. Retail sales is not

permitted use in I-1 zoning so a change of zoning must be completed from industrial to C3 highway commercial.”

Mumford explained that this property was sandwiched between other commercial properties and that the new store would be complementary to the neighboring properties. The new store would include a small landscape nursery, outside bullpen for landscaping and farm supplies as well as a tractor showroom. There would also be an area for repairing and servicing small engines, along with tractors. The existing Southern States store would remain, offering other services provided by the company.

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CAREER TEAM OFFERS SERVICES FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH

including TANF or SNAP recipients. Some of the supportive services we offer may include transportation, providing support for rent, career education and more.”

Powell explained that the program works closely with apprenticeship programs and are often able to pay those who go through the training while they are learning. They can also assist those who have dropped out of school with getting their high school diploma or GED. Participants must not be attending school in order to receive services as the contract for serving at-risk in-school students is held by Jobs for Delaware Graduates (JDG). However, JDG is often a referral agency to Career Team when one of their participants leaves school.

“What makes a person eligible?” Powell said. “They could be an ex-offender who’s coming out of incarceration, whether they’re youth or young adults. They could be a homeless or runaway youth coming out of foster care. We began working with Murphy School who was one of our great partners and have sent folks to us a prime example of working with our foster care program. We accept pregnant or parenting teens. We work very close with DAPI both in Kent and Sussex County, providing an opportunity for pregnant young women who attended that school. We work with the Delaware Fatherhood Initiative. So, for young fathers, teen fathers as well as young adults who are looking for support

BY TERRY ROGERS

Young people who are between the ages of 16 and 24 who meet certain criteria may be eligible for the Career Team program. The program is funded by The Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WOIA), a federal fund that also supports other youth employment initiatives and is managed by the Department of Labor. Their Kent County office is in the State Service Center in Milford.

“The primary focus around Career Team is workforce development, education and technology,” Anthony Powell, program manager, said. “We’ve been around for quite some time but this particular program is only in its second year. We provide the opportunity to work very closely with local employers and provide assistance to those who may have barriers to employment,

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- SOUTHERN STATES

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around a career path and individuals with disability.”

The program begins with intake and an eligibility assessment, according to Powell. Each participant is provided an Individual Service Strategy (ISS) that includes a goal plan which identifies barriers that may make it difficult for them to achieve their career goals. Once case management begins, the case manager meets monthly with the participant. If circumstances require, the case manager will meet weekly in order to provide the supports necessary for the participant to achieve success.

“Most of our participants come in with little or no work experience,” Powell said. “We offer an opportunity to kind of get their feet wet in an area they may have an interest. A prime example could be our partnership with Habitat for Humanity for those who are interested in entering the construction trades. We provide the funding to the employee but Habitat is the partner who is actually the employer. They assign a supervisor who serves as a one-on-one mentor. We’ve had people say ‘Man, I felt this is something I wanted to do, but I have to get up early in the morning, lift sheet rock,’ and they realize this might not be the career for them. And that is a great thing to find out.”

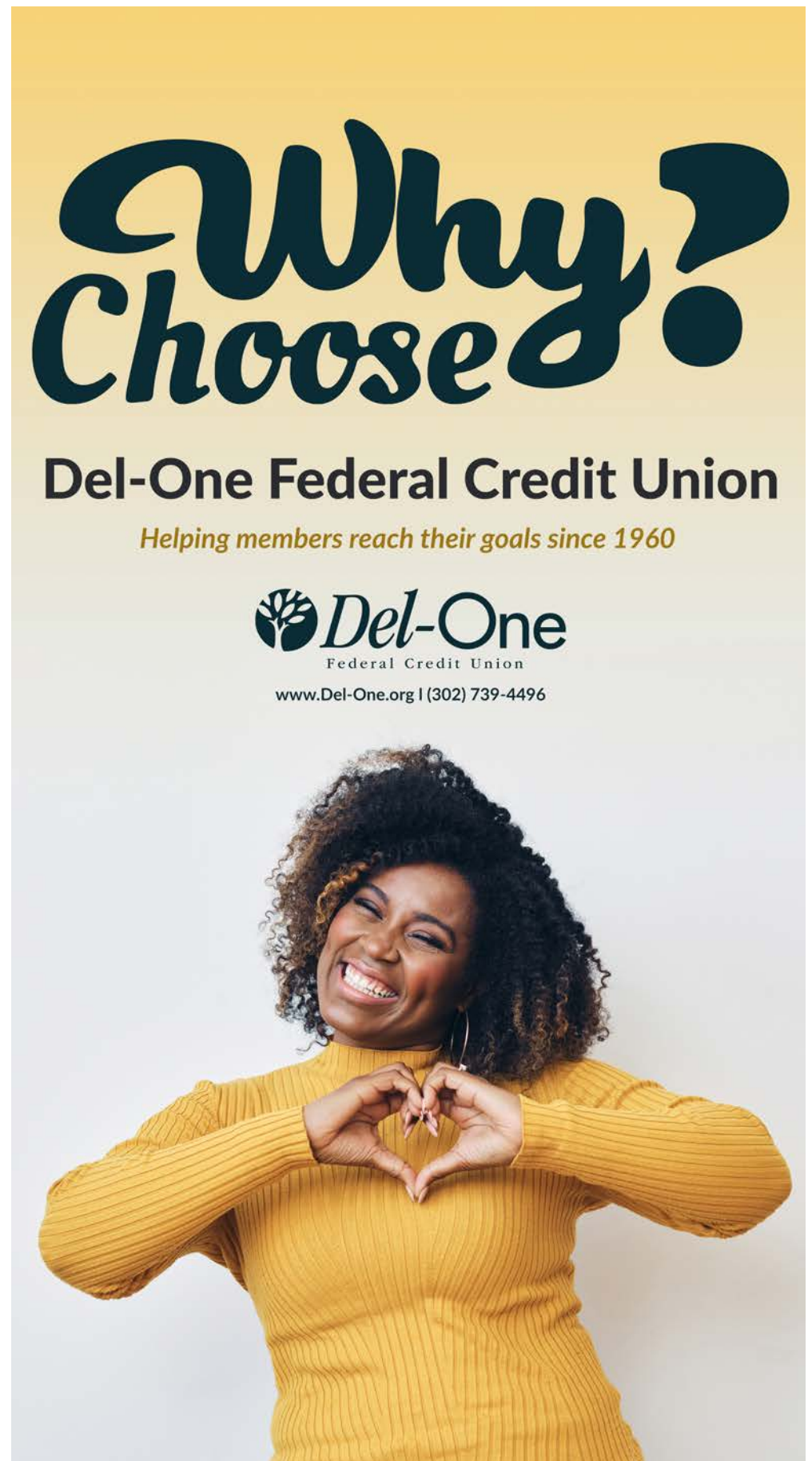
In addition to job placement services, Career Team is able to provide funding directly to the participant for up to 520 ours of on-the-job training. This allows those who may not be able to afford time off to gain experience during a job training program to not only gain the education they need but to work in the field as well. Powell used the example of two students who were

attending nursing classes who were able to work full-time while attending school due to the funds they received from Career Team. The program can pay between \$11 and \$16 per hour to those who qualify.

“We are required to do a 12-month follow up. So, the goal is not to just get our individuals placed in into some type of post-secondary education or job but to also follow them up to 12 months to make sure they’re successful,” Powell said. “We have some folks that may transition, they may start in a training program or educational program or on a job and may call us three months later and say ‘hey, this is not working out’ or ‘hey, unfortunately, I had a life changing experience that I need to kind of make a transition in my life.’ So again, we reengage them with a youth career advisor to address what those barriers are, what transitions they may need support in making and that has been a great opportunity to be responded to, to have the ability to follow them for 12 months. Some of them are still going strong and we just check in on them just to make sure that they know that their support system is in place because we have to track them to make sure that wherever we placed them, they’re still being successful in that placement.”


Another aspect of the Career Team program is Career Edge, an online soft skills platform that teaches how to create a resume, how to interview properly, telephone techniques and other skills that are necessary in today’s workforce.

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EDUCATION



Photo link: [Milford School District](#)



BY TERRY ROGERS

Tom Watson, author of “Stick Dog” and “Stick Cat,” recently visited Mispilliion and Lulu Ross Elementary schools. The author talked to students and drew with them during his visit. In addition, he had lunch with 15 students who participated in “I Love to Read” month.

“We were so excited to have Mr. Watson in our schools,” Trish Gerken, public information officer for Milford School District said. “He signed almost 500 books with a personalized illustration. He also taught students how to draw his characters. It was a wonderful experience for the students at both schools.”

Watson lives in Chicago with his wife and two children, a daughter and a son. The family does have a dog whose name is Shadow. His first job after leaving college was in politics. He worked for United States Sen. John Glenn and as the chief speechwriter for the governor of Ohio. He has also held jobs in marketing and advertising, but found that he enjoys writing children’s books much more than he enjoys writing speeches.

CHILDREN’S AUTHOR VISITS ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Several years ago, when his children were younger, Watson wrote and illustrated several rhyming picture books for them, and his wife suggested he share the stories with other children for free. The books are still available at Apple iBooks at no cost as well as at other electronic book outlets as well as on his website where they can be downloaded in PDF format and printed.

All the original sketches for the Stick Dog and Stick Cat stories are created by Watson and then completed by Ethan Long. Students loved hearing about how Watson creates his stories.

“Zeke couldn’t stop talking about lunch with Tom,” Theresa Mast commented on the district’s social media. “He really enjoyed the entire presentation.”

Stephany Vecchiolli commented that she was so happy the Ross Cats had so much fun with the author’s visit and that his books were flying off the library shelves. Leslie Passwaters commented that her daughter was very excited to get her book signed.

“My daughter loved the presentation and being chosen to eat lunch with him,” Jamie Blansfield commented. “The personalized inscription in her book was very nice!”

Suzanne Ketchum commented that his visit to Mispillion Elementary was “fabulous!”

Stick Dog and Stick Cat PDFs can be downloaded by visiting https://stickdogbooks.com/the_books.



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HEALTH



Photo link: Bayhealth Medical Center



BY TERRY ROGERS

PACE Your Life, an organization that provides comprehensive community-based services to seniors at the Milford Wellness Village, plans to hold an Spring Open House on Wednesday, April 19 from 4 to 6 p.m. The event will include tours and light refreshments.

“Since we opened, we have served people who are 55 or older who live in the service area,” Lisa Bond, program director said. “There is really a clear consensus that a program to serve seniors who really need coordinated care and social services is huge in this area.”

The program is open to seniors who may qualify for nursing home care but are able to live safely in their community while receiving services. In order to qualify, the senior must live in specific zip codes, including Milford, Harrington and Milton. PACE Your Life conducts an initial assessment and personalized care using an interdisciplinary team.

“Each participant has a doctor, clinic nurse, home health nurse, social worker, occupational therapist,

PACE YOUR LIFE PLANS SPRING OPEN HOUSE

physical therapist, registered dietitian and activities specialist,” Bond said. “Those who come in the morning get a light breakfast and, if they need to see a primary care physician, the doctor is on-site. We also offer physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy.”

Some participants come just for the socialization aspects, while others need more intensive assistance, including help with bathing or even laundry services if they can no longer perform those activities at home. There is a smaller room for memory care participants as well.

PACE Your Life is in the former Milford Memorial Hospital Emergency Department that has been renovated with bright colors and a large, saltwater fish tank. There is a mock kitchen with a stove and dishwasher designed to help those who may have mobility issues retrain themselves to use the appliance. Lunch is provided by the Village Café who can manage dietary restrictions.

The Open House is open to the public at 21 W. Clarke Street, Suite 1010. For more information call 302-865-3565 or visit www.paceyourlifemwv.com.



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photo by Dave McCallum

MILFORD POP WARNER SEASON A SUCCESS IN 2022

BY DAVE MCCALLUM

The 2022 Pop Warner cheer and football seasons were something to write home about for the more than 100 Milford youngsters who participated in the program, which featured three football and three cheer squads. It included a bid to Nationals for one of the cheerleading squads, while a football team earned a bid to regionals for the first time in recent memory.

The jayvee cheer squad which consisted of 10- through 13-year-olds, placed at the regionals in New Jersey and earned a bid to the Nationals in Orlando, FL. The squad, however, decided not to compete at the Nationals due to a cost factor.

“It was very expensive (a minimum of \$1,000 per girl) to go to the Nationals, and they (Nationals) ask for the money up front,” said Danielle Dixon, a member of the Pop Warner eight-person board. “When you (squad) find out you can go, you must pay the money a week

later. The competition was in the first week in December and for us it just wasn’t feasible to ask parents to come up with that kind of money right before Christmas. So, what we did was continued on and combined the two teams (jayvee and Mighty Mite) with the girls that wanted to keep cheering and we took them to the Global Cheer Championships in February in Atlantic City (NJ). They did really well and finished second in their division.”

The Mighty Mite cheer squad, made up of seven through nine-year-olds, finished 10th out of 22 teams and missed earning a bid to Nationals by 3.5 points.

“Pop Warner was always a big part of my childhood,” Dixon said. “I cheered through all the years that I was eligible, and a friend and I came back and coached when we turned 21. And now, my kids (Cali and Luke) both


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participated and that's how I got involved again. The season starts on Aug. 1, we practice throughout August, and we have (football) games on Saturdays in September and October, and the girls have cheer competition in October and November."

On the football side, the 8U squad went 7-1 and got a bid to the regional championships in Syracuse, NY. It is the first trip to the football regionals for a Milford squad that anyone on the Pop Warner board can recall, Dixon said.

Following the seasons, the program had its end-of-the-year banquet at the Ellendale Fire Hall where sponsors and coaches were recognized as well as giving out awards to the participants.

In addition to the football and cheer seasons, the Pop Warner program wanted to be more involved in community events, Dixon said.

"We wanted to be more involved in community events such as the Bug & Bud Festival, Third Thursday and Hippie Fest. We raised money also by selling concessions at the Milford High football games in the fall. We've also worked on getting sponsorships and one of the big ones was Equity Prime Mortgage. They purchased reversible football jerseys for our teams and bought out the concession stand one night after practice so everybody could have something to eat. We also received a sizeable grant from the Milford Lions Club, which bought all new cheer outfits for last season as well as an ice maker and other equipment needed for the building (Pop Warner Building on Lemuel St.)"

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POLICE & FIRE



Photo link: Downtown Milford Inc.

NEW POLICE CHIEF TO SPEAK AT 2ND FRIDAY

BY TERRY ROGERS

The First Presbyterian Church of Milford will present Chief Cecilia “Cece” Ashe, who was recently hired as the chief of police for the Milford Police Department. Chief Ashe will talk about her vision for the department and explain some of the processes in place to keep the town safe. The program is available both in person and via Zoom on April 14, at 7 p.m.

“I am honored to serve as Milford’s police chief, where our mission is to provide fair, compassionate and impartial police services to the citizens and visitors of the city of Milford,” Chief Ashe said. “It is our goal as an agency to continue to advance through training and knowledge of evidence-based research in law enforcement, while furthering our commitment to providing services that are led with empathy and compassion for the community we serve.”

Chief Ashe will talk about the core values of the department which include honor, integrity, dedication and duty. She feels that these values encourage and promote officer engagement with the community and builds a true partnership of respect and trust.

The church is located at 101 S. Walnut St. To access, park behind the church in the city parking lot and enter through the back door. Walk through the kitchen to the library. Anyone who would like to a Zoom invitation can do so by emailing 2ndFriday.Milford@gmail.com. Refreshments are provided at the presentation.

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