

# MILFORD LIVE

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**January 30, 2024**  
**Vol. 14 • Issue 5**

Headlines .....	2
Culture.....	8
Business .....	10
Government & Politics .....	14
Education.....	19
Health .....	22
Police & Fire.....	25
Stay Connected .....	27

photo link: [My Sister's Fault](#)



**New Print Shop Opens**



**Milford Homeless Village Hearing**



**MSD Literacy Plan**

# HEADLINES



photo link: Milford Police Department



# CURED PLATE PLANS FEBRUARY OPENING

Klingensmith and her husband, Kenny, began to consider opening a restaurant that emphasized charcuterie, although she stated that charcuterie is actually not cheese but references the cured meats used on the board. They began researching and found that there was not a single charcuterie-themed, speakeasy restaurant in Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey or Virginia. In addition, Klingensmith stated that the 1920s-1930s era has always “spoken” to her.

“I like the darkness. I like the moodiness. I like the secretiveness. I like all of that about it,” Klingensmith said. “Initially we were just going to open a typical storefront where you walk or call in, place your order, and pick it up later, but I always tell my children to dare to be different, so I knew we needed to do just that. So, when the opportunity arose for this place, we decided to listen to our own advice and try to turn a building in Milford into a speakeasy-style charcuterie restaurant.”

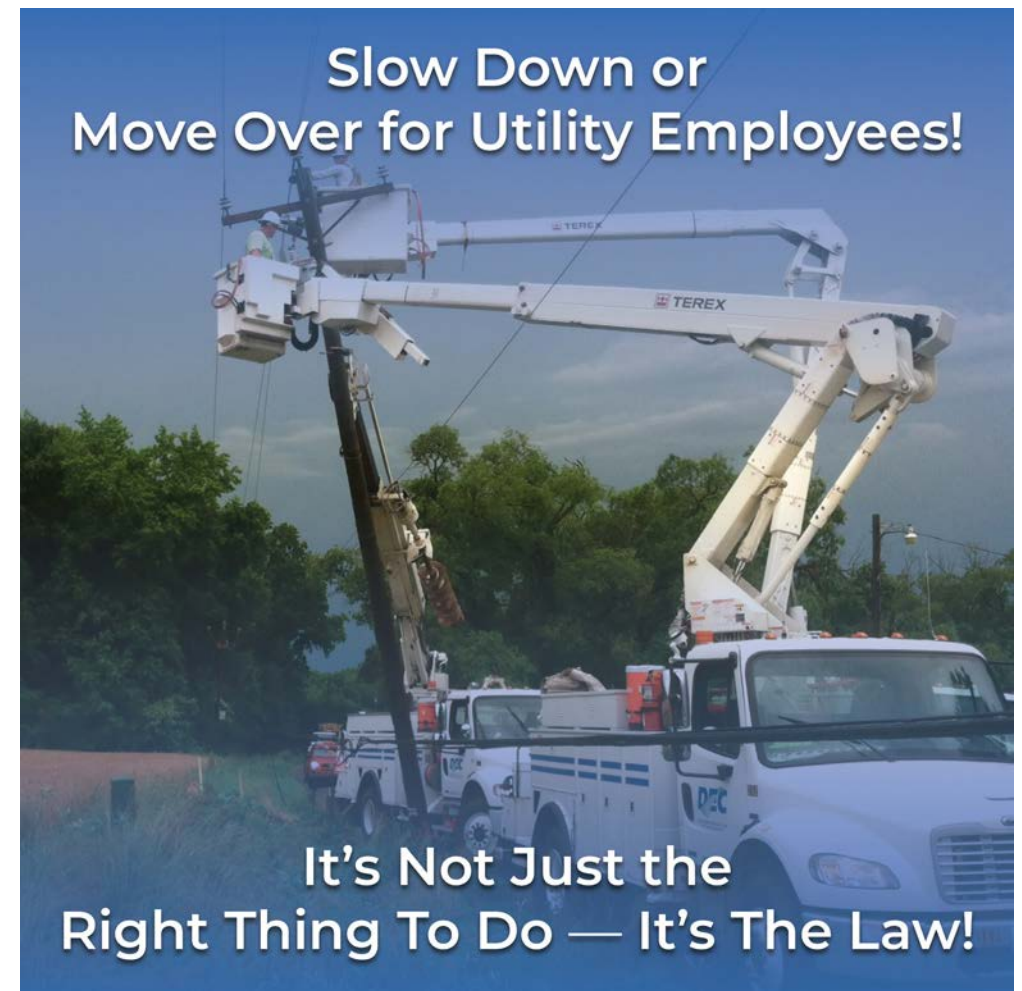
Located at 27 S. Walnut Street, Suite 103, in the former Josephine Keir Building, Cured Plate is designed like a Prohibition era, speakeasy. Stayng true to the era, lighting will be by natural candles, small personal lamps and a chandelier with flickering candlelight. Sofa seating, cigar chairs, cocktail tables, along with two U-benches near the door for larger parties fill the room that is accented by a bar in period colors. In the center of the bar is a lighted sign by LuckyKat Designs, reading “a whole vibe.”

see page 4

BY TERRY ROGERS

Liz Klingensmith has been creating beautiful charcuterie boards for some time, looking at the process as an art form. Besides opening doors for her, she found creating works of art out of cheeses, meats and accompaniments to be an artistic outlet.

“And then, charcuterie kind of became a trend about two years ago. Everybody was kind of jumping on that bandwagon,” Klingensmith said. “It was a true artistic endeavor. It’s a true artistic element. When we would go to restaurants when this trend started, we would see charcuterie on menus at many restaurants on the appetizer side, and it was just meats and cheeses kind of thrown on a board. There was no artistic element to it and that’s what charcuterie truly is, it’s food art.”



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from page 3

“That’s the biggest thing here for me, the vibe” Klingensmith said. “I really want this to be a place you won’t ever forget. A place when you come, it’s relaxing, it’s moody and it’s vibey; like you took a step back in time. Our goal is create an entire experience. We will keep many things secret keeping true to the times, but that’s the fun aspect. I want the atmosphere to be what really captivates people, and the staff and food to be what makes you keep coming back.”

As for food offerings, Klingensmith explained that there will be more than just charcuterie boards.

“We have hearty appetizers, sides, other entrees and desserts. But, our biggest emphasis is on our build-your-own cheese and charcuterie boards. Our menu is on the smaller side, this way we can perfect the food we’re serving. Quality, and the commitment to local farmers is huge for us, local is always better. With our space being on the smaller side, we knew we needed to come up with something that worked for every lifestyle.”

Because of the small space they have available, reservations will be required, except for two days each month that will be reserved strictly for walk-ins. Social media platforms will be used to provide guests with the “secret” method they will need to gain access to the Cured Plate.

“I think this will mostly attract adults. I don’t see many people bringing their children, but we have five children ourselves and there have been times we wanted to have a fancier meal, and we had to take our children with us, so we wanted to be able to cater to those families as well,” Klingensmith said.

see page 5

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from page 4

The cocktail menu will be true to the era and offer more high-end wines and liquors,

“We will have about eight reds and six white wines, a Prosecco and rose. You can expect to see spirits like Old Forester 1920 prohibition whiskey, and Uncle Nearest used in our drinks. During our spirits selection, we made sure that no one else around here used what we chose, so we could offer something truly different.”

Cheeses, meats, jams, honey and other items are procured from local sources, with a growing list. Vegan and gluten-free options will be available for those with dietary restrictions. There will also be a retail shelf offering locally made jewelry, jams, honey, along with other food items and merchandise.

Cured Plate will hold a soft opening on Feb. 9 and 10, with a grand opening on Tuesday, Feb. 13.

“We’re not going to be open on Tuesdays, but I wanted to do the grand opening before Valentine’s Day,” Klingensmith said. “We will hold a ribbon cutting on Feb. 13 at 2 p.m. and open to the public at 4 p.m. that day.”

Hours for Cured Plate will be Wednesday and Thursday from 4 to 9 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 4 to 11 p.m. They will be closed Sunday through Tuesday.



Application Period Re-Opens: FEB. 1 - MARCH 1, 2024!

# EDGE

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**BY TERRY ROGERS**

In spring 2023, Brianna Westover and her husband, Ben Kepler, learned that they were recipients of an Encouraging Development, Growth and Expansion (EDGE) Grant from the state of Delaware. Using the funds from the grant, the couple opened Studio B, a printing studio with a twist.

“We worked for a print shop for 10 years,” Westover said. “While we were on our honeymoon, we stopped in a print shop because we needed some things printed and were amazed at how cool it looked. We looked at each other and said ‘this is beautiful, we can totally do this.’ And, here we are.”

According to Kepler, the print shop they visited in Seattle offered more than just standard printing services. They also had unique items available for sale for travel use, organization and décor. For this reason, Studio B, named in recognition of the couple’s first names, will also be an art supply plus studio space.

“This was the Delaware Eye Center,” Kepler said. “Each of the examination room has been converted to a

# EDGE GRANT RECIPIENTS OPEN NEW PRINT SHOP

rentable studio space. We are also offering a cyclical art gallery where local artists will be able to display and sell their art.”

Currently, in addition to print and design options, Studio B also offers notary services and hopes to be a mail drop-off location in the next few months. The goal of the entire studio is to promote professional assistance as well as a supportive, creative environment for independent creators. Westover and Kepler hope to provide access to high-end equipment that are typically out of reach for many smaller artists and creators.

Westover explained that the EDGE Grant was instrumental in helping them achieve their dream.

“Just over a year ago, the idea of becoming business owners was still evolving from a farfetched dream to a realistic possibility. As we were developing the idea for the studio and engaging in the planning process, we realized that while we had extensive experience in the print and design industries, we would need guidance navigating the world of business. We reached out to SCORE DE and the DE Small Business Development Center and were connected with our wonderful business advisor Lissette Cabrera-Galloza with DE SBDC,” Westover said. “From our first conversation she was a wealth of information, we learned that the state of

see page 7



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Delaware is incredible at encouraging entrepreneurship and heavily invests in the growth and development of small business owners. We learned that the EDGE Grant application window was just around the corner, with applications being due in late March. We decided to go for it. Throughout the process of researching and writing the grant application the SBDC assisted with access to case studies, demographic and market analysis data, as well as review of the written application before submitting the final version.”

The couple already had a draft preliminary business plan, but say the process of researching and writing the EDGE Grant application gave invaluable insight into developing a clear and concise plan and narrative of what they would offer as part of Studio B.

“In addition to the infusion of capital for essential equipment, the EDGE Grant opened doors to networking within the Milford area and beyond, always pointing us in the right direction with introductions to Kent County Regional Business Manager and Delaware on Main Statewide Coordinator, Anastasia Jackson; Milford Economic Development Director Sara Bluhm; Downtown Milford, Inc.; financial points of contacts and more,” Westover said. “We are incredibly grateful for the resources and opportunities working with these great agencies have provided. Going into 2023, we never

dreamt that we would be sitting in our own storefront ringing in the New Year 2024. We look forward to being able to continue to grow and provide a wealth of resources to our Milford businesses, neighbors, artists and friends.”

The couple is hoping to develop our creative studio spaces, develop a schedule of educational classes focusing on traditional, digital and print media arts, collaborate with local artists to continue to expand their consignment gallery, offer a selection of high quality art supplies and stationery, and expand their in house printing capabilities.

Studio B is located at 110 Northeast Front Street in Milford. Ample parking is available in the city lot in front of Arena’s and Surf Bagel, located across Park Avenue from the new studio. The hours are 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. On Saturday, hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Learn more by calling 302-491-7910, email [print@studiobmilford.com](mailto:print@studiobmilford.com) or visit their [website](#).



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# CULTURE



photo link: [Second Street Players](#)





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# COMEDY SHOW FEATURED AT SENIOR CENTER

BY TERRY ROGERS

Milford Senior Center will present “Multislacking a la Cardbordeaux,” a two-hour comedy sketch revue on Saturday, Feb. 3 at 7 p.m. The show will feature new sound, lighting and other upgrades at the center while offering a break from the winter blues.

“This is the second time we have presented this show and it is always a huge hit with the audience,” Amy Stratton, director of the Milford Senior Center said. “The show consists of 30 hysterically funny skits that will have you roaring with laughter.”

The show is produced by Stanton’s 4th Wall, located in Kent County. They strive to produce shows that are not available in other venues, from dramas to uproarious comedies. Multislacking a la Cardbordeaux is similar to Saturday Night Live with multiple comedy skits and acts that keep the audience laughing. Stratton pointed out that the skits do have adult content and may not be suitable for children.

The Milford Senior Center will offer a cash bar at the event. Tickets are \$20 in advance and \$25 at the door. Tickets in advance can be purchased by stopping in at the senior center, located at 111 Park Avenue, Milford. For more information, call 302-422-3385.




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# BUSINESS



photo link: [Marcia Reed](#)



# RIBBON CUTTING PLANNED FOR STEWART'S GOURMET CANDIES & SNOW CONES

BY TERRY ROGERS

What began as a hobby after she purchased a food drying machine officially becomes a brick and mortar store on Saturday, Feb. 3, when Stewart's Gourmet Candies & Snow Cones holds their grand opening and ribbon cutting at 2 p.m.

"We are so excited to hold the ribbon cutting," Melissa Stewart, who owns the shop, said. "We opened in December and it has already been great, especially on weekends. We offer our own freeze-dried specialties as well as retro and unique candy items you can't find anywhere else."

Inside the store, one wall contains the freeze-dried items Stewart makes herself, everything from Peeps to oatmeal pies to Skittles. Stewart began selling her freeze-dried creations online, trying out new and unique items

regularly to see how they worked in the drying machine. She saw the idea on TikTok and decided to test a candy bar in her own machine, learning what worked and what did not. Stewart has tested pickles, Twinkies, Airheads, Sour Patch Kids plus much more.

"We wanted to do more than the freeze dried items," Stewart explained. "I started looking for items I remembered as a kid and found all types of novelty candy items. We have things like Razzles & Runts, candy dispensers with Garbage Pail Kids on them, light up lollipops and more. We wanted this to be a place where kids could have fun and find things they liked while also sending adults back to their childhood."

Bulk candies like jellybeans, gummy bears and more are also available. Stewart even offers a champagne as



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well as chocolate covered gummy bears. Fudge is available by the pound, along with pretzels coated in butterscotch chips. Not wanting to limit herself to candy, Stewart also offers gourmet snow cones in flavors like dreamsicle, cotton candy, Barbie, Nana's cheesecake and more.

To celebrate the grand opening, Stewart's Gourmet Candies and Snow Cones is offering a free snow cone to the first 50 customers. The store is open Wednesday through Friday from noon until 5 p.m. and on Saturday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. They are located at 27 S. Walnut Street in Milford. For more information call 302-222-6929, email stwrtsfreezedried@gmail.com or find them on Facebook.





## PARKER GROUP CELEBRATES FIRST ANNIVERSARY

BY TERRY ROGERS

The Parker Group opened their third location in Milford, taking over the first floor of what is known as the Pikus Building and housed Lou's Bootery for decades, last year. Although Dustin Parker explained that the office, they opened in Georgetown three years ago plus one in Lewes two years ago are thriving, Milford's office has grown significantly in one year.

"My wife and I live just seven or eight minutes outside of town, so this is the community where we do most of our shopping, go the gym. We've also been fortunate to attract some great people that live in the area, so it has just been a great place for us to open up shop."

Once the office opened, Parker explained that they decided to house their property management company, Neon Lease, in the Milford office as most of the proper-

ties they manage are in the area. This has also allowed the company to reach farther into Kent County as they have agents who travel from Dover, Smyrna and even Middletown. The growth of their property management company led to the Parker's wooing Sara Bluhm, currently the Economic Development and Community Engagement Manager with the city of Milford to join them as the manager of the property management company.

"We have actually been impressed with role she played with the city. She's just been such an impressive, incredible asset that it was kind of like a double-edged sword," Parker said. "We love the work that she was doing for the city. We were excited to bring her on board. She was the one who originally introduced us to our landlord,

Dan Bond, who has since become a good friend. She's been great for the community of Milford, and I think she will do great things for us as well."

The Parker Group got into property management a few years ago "almost by mistake," Parker explained. He stated that property management involves helping investors who may not live near the area handle rental properties, both residential and commercial. Parker explained that once an investor has more than two or three properties, if they cannot manage them full-time, it can be difficult. Their property management company addresses those issues.

"We kept having people come to us it seemed like almost every day, investors looking for property management because they needed help, and we were struggling to find people to send them to. In this market, there are a lot of individual agents that handle maybe a couple, but there were not many companies that did it on a larger scale or who had the technology systems in place," Parker said. "We ourselves are investors, we own several properties, so we felt like we could use someone to manage ours. We wanted to provide that service to our clients, so that is what drew us to property management. With Sara coming on board now, we are really hoping to expand that team and that portfolio. We are one of the investors with Dan Bond that is remodeling the firehouse, so that will be part of the mix as part of our portfolio. We also have a really large project in Georgetown as well that will be significant for residential units we manage as well, so we are looking forward to growing that aspect."

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# JOHN MOLLURA

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# GOVERNMENT & POLITICS



photo link: Marcia Reed



## HEARING ON MILFORD HOMELESS VILLAGE IS COMMENT-PALOOZA

BY KATIE KAZIMIR

A Milford City Council hearing on a proposed tiny house village for the homeless packed the council chamber, lobby and a basement overflow room on Jan. 22 with people who spent four hours expressing their opinions. No vote was taken.

Everyone who spoke agreed that it was important to help the homeless. They also stressed that the city should do something to help with skyrocketing apartment and home costs. But many opposed the plan to put 40 small houses on property either near the old and new police stations or near a former homeless encampment on the city's west side. The village would be built by non-profit **Springboard Collaborative**, which opened a homeless village in Georgetown last year.

A recurring theme from supporters was that it was the town's Christian duty to approve the plan for the village. One woman, however, took the microphone to announce she was Christian, but did not want the village.

Those opposed, mostly local business owners, urged the council to consider the impact a homeless village would have on Milford's larger economic picture, especially being built in what's considered a gate to the community.

"It's not a good look," said downtown business owner Marissa King, a business owner and the first to speak when the council asked for comment from people who opposed the project.

A homeless village would drive down the local economy because of the fear factor, many said. They cited public safety concerns about mental issues and substance abuse, common among the homeless. Several of those opposed suggested a location further from the business district would be a better solution, King said.

Many residents said they were worried about increased time and safety, especially walking after dark, and increased crime.

see page 16

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Carrie Casey, general manager of the county's Department of Community Services, said that 15% of the 3,470 residents that the New Castle County **Hope Center** has taken care of come from Kent and Sussex counties.

"That's more than 500 people who have had to be displaced from where they know their children go to school," she said. "People want to be able to get their life back in the town where they live and where their community is."

### Village financing

The Springboard Collaborative received \$1.4 million in American Rescue Plan money to build a central Sussex village and they want to do it in Milford. The money will cover site plans, lawyer fees and more.

The Milford village will cost about \$1 million a year to operate, the same as Georgetown's, said Springboard Executive Director Judson Malone on Jan. 23. That breaks down to about \$65 per day per person since there are 40 to 50 people per village, and most goes to staffers who oversee the site and occupants.

"It may seem like a lot," Malone said, but it's similar to the costs the state paid for housing vouchers during the COVID-19 epidemic.

Additional costs that will be covered include utilities, insurance, business expenses or anything associated with the operating the facility, Malone said.

In Georgetown, the land is being borrowed under a temporary land use agreement, with no conditions from the planning for zoning commission. In Milford, the agency is seeking a conditional use for a shelter agreement.

To do that Springboard has to establish a site, develop a site plan, go before the planning committee, have a public hearing, go before the council, have another public hearing and then a council vote.

Georgetown's village operation is funded through foundation grants and donations.

"That's not sustainable in the long run," Malone said.

Once Milford's village is built, he expects the state to contract for specialized services, often provided by the Division of Health and Social Services.

The Georgetown village is connected with nonprofits that help the residents work through the processes needed to get permanent housing.

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# EDGE GRANT WORKSHOP PLANNED

BY TERRY ROGERS

The Economic Vitality Committee for Downtown Milford Inc. (DMI) has arranged for a workshop that will provide details on the Encouraging Development, Growth & Expansion (EDGE) Grant. Anastasia Jackson from the Division of Small Business will facilitate the workshop Wednesday, Jan. 31, from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. in the Training Conference Room at Milford City Hall, located at 119 S. Walnut Street.

“DMI’s Economic Vitality Committee began a series of educational workshops that are designed to help Milford businesses learn more about resources available to help them grow,” Pat Abel, chairman of the EV Committee said. “A few months ago we worked with Danielle Swallow to provide details on coastal flooding and how businesses could protect themselves. This is the second in that series.”

The Division of Small Business awards EDGE Grants through a competitive selection process. Five STEM-

based companies can each receive up to \$100,000 for eligible expenses. Five Entrepreneur Class (non-STEM) businesses can each get up to \$50,000. The funds are provided as a \$3 (state) to \$1 (business) match and the Division can provide up to 10 grants per application round (spring/fall). My Sister’s Fault, a Milford-based business, was a recipient of an EDGE Grant in spring 2022.

“Eligible expenses that can be used from the EDGE Grant include market analysis assistance, advertising assistance, building infrastructure, essential equipment, website design or rent for lab space,” the state website dedicated to EDGE explained. “It cannot be used for employee wages unless they result a durable competitive advantage, owner salaries, permits, government fees or taxes.”

see page 18



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from page 17

There are minimum requirements for applicants. The applicant must have been in operation for less than seven years, must employ 10 or less full-time employees. Two part-time people equal one full-time but those who work under 10 hours per week do not count toward the employee count. The business must be majority located in Delaware and must provide a current balance sheet plus income statement. In any jurisdiction where “good standing” is required, the business must meet such conduct of business. A proposal is required with a completed and signed application. Proposals must be 20 pages or less. The applicant must have current business and professional licenses required under Titles 24 and 30 of the Delaware Code, not have more than \$500,000 in net assets and be in good standing under the laws of Delaware.

“We do need a head count for this workshop,” Abel said. “The deadline to register is Tuesday, Jan. 30, at noon. Register for free by emailing Pat19607@gmail.com. Include your name, business name and phone number. Registration can also be completed by calling 302-470-1310.”

All businesses who meet the qualifications are welcome to attend the workshop.



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# EDUCATION



photo link: [Milford School District](#)

# MILFORD SCHOOL LEADERS ENCOURAGED BY DISTRICT LITERACY PLAN

BY JAREK RUTZ

Officials in the [Milford School District](#) answered questions and gave updates Jan. 22 about the progress of the district's literacy plan. Kelly Carvajal Hageman, Milford's chief academic officer, pointed out in the district's monthly board meeting that Gov. John Carney and Education Secretary Mark Holodick have urged the state in the past two years to focus on literacy.

A 2022 law mandated that by the 2027-28 school year districts and charters would be required to create a curriculum from a state-curated list to make sure all reading teachers are trained to teach lessons rooted in the science of reading. The [science of reading](#) stems from brain research that shows how students learn to read. It has six essential components: phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary, text comprehension and oral language.

"Milford is very far ahead of the curve because we have a very robust literacy professional learning plan in

action for our schools that has been started this year," she said.

Hageman said the literacy plan was built with four goals:

- Strengthen all components of Tier I literacy instruction K-5 to include rigorous grade level access to all students in all settings.
- Develop the school reading specialist role into a literacy coach, enabling them to lead the literacy teams in their respective schools, coach teachers on all components of Bookworms instruction and facilitate data analysis meetings.
- Integrate Multilingual Learner Services and Literacy Services in K-5.
- Create School Literacy Teams with reading support paraprofessionals, multilingual teachers and paras, and reading specialists.

see page 21

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from page 20

“What I’d like to see is that [the plan] is really data driven and collaborative in the decision-making so that every single student is accounted for and that we know where their gaps are and that we work together to close those gaps,” Hageman said.

Most of the attention the state has paid towards literacy focuses on the early development of a child, specifically between kindergarten and third grade.

Many legislators and educational advocates repeat the mantra that from kindergarten to third grade, students learn to read, and after that, students read to learn.

Research has shown that developing literacy skills becomes exceptionally harder after the third grade.

Milford has integrated Bookworms, a curriculum that is aligned with the science of reading.

The principals of Banneker Elementary and Mispillion Elementary — Chad Luzier and Jodi Messick, respectively — told the school board that the adoption of the literacy plans at their school have been successful thus far.

Luzier highlighted the importance of professional development, stating that his school has ensured that the teachers had the updated and appropriate resources, and made sure novice teachers had an understanding of the new materials.

The collaboration of reading specialists, multi-language specialists, curriculum coaches and teachers has been vital to the success, he said.

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# HEALTH



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# AVOIDING THE WINTER BLUES

tween four and nine percent of Americans are impacted by SAD in the winter.

“Feeling blue for a period of time is not, per se, normal,” Jacqueline Gollan, Ph.D., a professor in psychiatry said in an interview with Everyday Health. “When people feel blue, it’s a signal something in their life needs attention.”

One suggestion for dealing with increased feelings of depression in the winter is to exercise vigorously for 20 minutes at least four times each week. This could be walking, joining a gym, taking the stairs instead of the elevator or even riding a bicycle to work when the weather permits. Another tip is to be sure you stick to a sleep schedule.

“It is tempting to sleep in when the weather is cold and the mornings are dark, but it is important to establish a routine time to wake up each morning and go to bed at night,” Dr. Gollans said. “The average adult needs at least seven hours sleep each night, so aim for at least that. If you don’t have a set sleeping pattern now, keep in mind it could take three or four weeks to get into one.”

Although it may sound like a cliché, laughter really is the best medicine when it comes to managing the winter blues. Watch a funny movie, standup comedian or invite some friends over to share some laughs with you. Surprisingly, a good quality hot cocoa can also elevate

see page 24

## STAFF REPORT

Although the days have started getting longer, the month of January is when many people complain of the “winter blues.” Seasonal affective disorder (SAD), most commonly known as the winter blues, can lead to symptoms that include persistent low mood, irritability, lethargy and even weight gain as the body craves carbohydrates. Dark mornings and evenings as well as skies that tend to be grayer than in warmer months can lead to feelings of depression or sadness. However, there are steps that can be taken to help avoid those winter doldrums.

The fact is that “winter blues” is not an “official” medical condition as there are those who suffer from SAD in the summer as well. It is believed, however, that be-

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from page 23

your mood. Use a non-dutched natural cocoa powder and combine it with warm, fortified milk. The cocoa also has heart-healthy and mood-boosting flavonoids while the milk can increase serotonin levels.

Adding more fish to your diet can also help boost moods along with whole grains, fruits and vegetables. At least one egg each week, including the yolk, is a good source of choline that also promotes metabolism and energy.

“Another reason people are often dealing with lower moods in January is that the hustle and bustle of the holiday season is over,” Dr. Gollan said. “That doesn’t mean you need to end all celebrations, though. Throw a dinner party, family game night or even a cheese tasting gathering that will likely put you and your friends in much better spirits.”

Light therapy is another way to elevate moods in the winter. If you leave for work when it is dark and return home in the dark, you may simply be missing sunshine. Consider taking a walk on your lunch hour as a way to get more sunlight into your life. If this is not possible, a full-spectrum light box can regulate your circadian rhythms as a natural way to release energy hormones. It is important to discuss your seasonal depression with your doctor, before such intensive therapy, however.



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# POLICE & FIRE



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# MPD SEEKING INFORMATION ON SHOOTER

## STAFF REPORT

On Jan. 27, 2023, at approximately 7:06 p.m., the Milford Police Department Patrol Division was dispatched to the 200 block of North St. for a shots fired incident. Upon arrival, officers learned that a victim was possibly struck but was not on the scene. A short time later, a 28-year-old male victim arrived at Bayhealth Sussex Campus via private vehicle, with a non-life-threatening gunshot wound. This investigation is ongoing and any-

one with any information in reference to this incident can contact Det. Richard DaFonte of the Milford Police at 302-422-8081 ext. 5112 or Delaware Crime Stoppers at 1-800-TIP-3333. Tips can also be submitted [online](#).



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