



## Fr. Joel Almonó's retirement Mass



“La Ciudad de Lawrence se siente profundamente honrada y agradecida por los más de 18 años de servicio dedicado y apoyo inquebrantable del Padre Joel Almonó. Al iniciar este merecido nuevo capítulo de jubilación, Lawrence siempre lo tendrá en la más alta estima. Su impacto en nuestra comunidad es inmensurable, y siempre estaremos agradecidos por su guía y compasión.

“Un sincero agradecimiento a la Delegación Estatal, los Concejales de la ciudad y a todos los miembros de la comunidad que se unieron para honrar y celebrar este momento especial para el Padre Joel Almonó,” dijo el



alcalde Brian A. DePeña.

Read it in English and see more pictures on page 7

## Christmas and Yankee Swap Party International Veterans Care Services, Inc. (IVCS)



150 veterans and families enjoyed a holiday get together filled with music, prizes, good food, and fun. (More pictures on page 3)

## Gov. Healey Announces Housing Development Incentive Awards to Create 1,256 Units, Lower Costs



Johan Lopez shows his appreciation to Governor Maura Healy and Lt. Governor Kim Driscoll, while his wife Walkiria, and Housing and Livable Communities Secretary Ed Augustus look on, after receiving the HDIP Award of \$2,500,000.

### Largest Funding Year in Program History is a Result of Governor Healey's Tax Cuts Package

As part of a \$1 billion tax package signed by the Governor in October 2023, the annual HDIP program cap was raised to \$30 million annually with a one-time increase of \$57 million. That increase allowed the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities to fund 25 projects in 15 Gateway Cities this year. Pg. 5. Spanish on Pg. 6

## Lawrence General Hospital first in the state and first in New England awarded Sustainable Healthcare Certification from The Joint Commission

Lawrence General is nationally recognized for its commitment to prioritizing environmental sustainability Pg. 2

“Uno de los desastres más gloriosos del mundo es el que se crea en la sala de nuestro hogar el día de Navidad. No lo limpies demasiado rápido”.

"One of the most glorious messes in the world is the mess created in the living room on Christmas day. Don't clean it up too quickly."

Andy Rooney

## Una mirada a nuestro sistema de salud: ¿Por qué está roto? Pg. 7



# Merrimack Valley Credit Union Makes Annual \$30,000 Donation to Haverhill's Emmaus, Inc.

The donation marks three decades of partnership between the credit union and the nonprofit organization



From left: MVCU President & CEO John J. Howard, Emmaus Vice President of Strategic Planning and Administration Eunice Zeigler and Emmaus Vice President of Operations Al Hanscom.

Merrimack Valley Credit Union (MVCU) has donated \$30,000 to Emmaus, Inc. in Haverhill, Mass. The credit union is proud to be the nonprofit's longest running and largest partner, having donated more than half a million dollars through 30 years of support for Emmaus, Inc.

Emmaus, Inc. is a nonprofit organization that provides emergency shelter and affordable housing to families and individuals facing homelessness. The organization also offers supportive services including homelessness

prevention, rehousing and stabilization, career services, parental support and a coordinated entry process to "ensure that families and individuals experiencing homelessness receive appropriate assistance for their immediate and long-term housing and service needs" (according to the Emmaus, Inc. website).

"I can't believe it has already been thirty years since we first partnered with Emmaus to support their incredible work in our communities," said MVCU President &

CEO John J. Howard. "There are a growing number of families and individuals who rely on Emmaus' programs and resources. We are honored to sponsor their efforts to promote stability, dignity and confidence for our community members."

"In a time when housing insecurity impacts the lives of so many people, it is heartwarming to know that Emmaus can rely on support from MVCU," says Emmaus Vice President of Strategic Planning and Administration Eunice Zeigler. "On behalf of the families and individuals we serve, we say 'thank you' to the dedicated team at MVCU."

Emmaus CEO Jeanine T. Murphy added: "Their support helps us to change lives, and we remain ever grateful for 30 years of meaningful partnership with MVCU."

To learn more about MVCU's community efforts, visit [www.mvcu.com/news](http://www.mvcu.com/news).

## About Merrimack Valley Credit Union

Founded in 1955, Merrimack Valley Credit Union (MVCU) is a state-chartered community and employer-based credit union with more than \$2.3 billion in assets. The corporate office is located in Lawrence, Massachusetts. MVCU currently serves more than 115,000 members, primarily in Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Rhode Island. MVCU also serves more than 1,100 employer groups, including two major Massachusetts employers, Raytheon Technologies and Brigham and Women's Hospital, and operates 19 retail branches located in Amesbury, Bridgewater, Brookline, Danvers, Dorchester, Fairhaven, Haverhill, Hanover, Lawrence, Marlborough, Methuen, North Andover, Plymouth, Quincy, Tewksbury, Waltham and Worcester, Mass., plus Plaistow and Seabrook, N.H. MVCU offers a wide range of savings and loan products, commercial services and digital banking to meet the financial needs of a growing member base.

## Lawrence General Hospital first in the state and first in New England awarded Sustainable Healthcare Certification from The Joint Commission

Lawrence General is nationally recognized for its commitment to prioritizing environmental sustainability

Lawrence General Hospital has earned The Joint Commission's Sustainable Healthcare Certification (SHC) by prioritizing environmental sustainability through decarbonization efforts. The certification demonstrates Lawrence General's achievement in establishing structure, rigor, and accountability to accelerate these efforts. They are the first in the state, first in New England, and one of only 11 hospitals in the country to earn the recognition.

The healthcare industry accounts for nearly nine percent of the nation's carbon emissions. In reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, organizations commit to cost-effective and efficient operations that seek to address climate change and the impacts that climate-related events can have on individuals.

Lawrence General underwent a rigorous virtual review on Dec. 12, 2024. During the review, a team of Joint Commission reviewers evaluated compliance with related certification standards including the organization's contribution toward global sustainability, its baselines for measuring three sources of GHG emissions and its actionable plans for reducing them.

"Sustainable Healthcare Certification recognizes healthcare organizations committed to striving for excellence and fostering continuous improvement in patient safety, quality of care and environmental sustainability," said Ken Grubbs, DNP, MBA, RN, executive vice president of Accreditation and Certification Operations and chief nursing officer, The Joint Commission. "We commend Lawrence General Hospital for using The Joint Commission's certification process to enact sustainable practices and utilize resources that positively benefit patients and the environment."

"Lawrence General Hospital is proud to be recognized by The Joint Commission for our efforts to promote environmental sustainability throughout the hospital and reduce the negative impacts of climate change

on patient care and hospital operations," said Lawrence General Hospital President and CEO Dr. Abha Agrawal. "This certification is a testament to our team of caregivers who work tirelessly to reduce the environmental footprint of our healthcare facility for the benefit of our communities."

Lawrence General also demonstrated continued efforts to reduce the hospital's carbon footprint through partnerships with organizations including the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's Safety Net Decarbonization Collaborative, MassDEP, Recycle Works, Waste Focus and World Health.

Lawrence General also maintains a long-standing relationship with Groundwork Lawrence, partnering with them on numerous environmental initiatives.

## About Lawrence General Hospital

As an independent, not-for-profit hospital serving the Merrimack Valley and Southern New Hampshire, Lawrence General Hospital provides access to high-quality care and a growing network of local providers, including primary care and many specialties. A designated Level III Trauma Center, Lawrence General has one of the busiest Emergency Departments in Massachusetts. Lawrence General offers a broad range of services and specialty surgeries in its Santagati Center for surgery and leads the region in cardiac care with Massachusetts' most highly accredited cardiovascular center. With more than 11,000 inpatient discharges per year, 1,400 births, and a dedicated team of nearly 2,000 employees, Lawrence General has proudly served the region since 1875 and is a major acute care provider of emergency, surgical, medical, maternity, and newborn care for the Merrimack Valley and southern New Hampshire. Lawrence General Hospital joined forces with Holy Family Hospital in October 2024, expanding access to care for all across the region. For more information, visit [www.LawrenceGeneral.org](http://www.LawrenceGeneral.org).



**Feliz Navidad!**

*Wishing you and yours a safe and joyous holiday season.*

### Holiday Hours

#### Christmas

All bank offices will **CLOSE** on **Tuesday, December 24<sup>th</sup>** at 12 Noon & remain closed on Christmas Day. We will reopen on **Thursday, December 26<sup>th</sup>** at 8:00 am.

#### New Year's Day

All bank offices will **CLOSE** on **Tuesday, January 31<sup>st</sup>** at 3 pm & remain closed on New Year's Day. We will reopen on **Thursday, January 2<sup>nd</sup>** at 8:00 am.

*Our ATMs and online banking are available 24/7!*



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# Christmas and Yankee Swap Party sponsored by International Veterans Care Services, Inc. (IVCS) VFW, 26 River St., Methuen

December 15, 2024

Photos courtesy of Richard Russell

150 veterans and families enjoyed a holiday get together filled with music, prizes, good food, and fun.

Kelly Birchall Frazier wants to give a big thanks to Don Barnard who presented IVCS with a \$5,000 from the Elks Association; State Representative Francisco Paulino and Heavenly Donuts for the coffee and donuts; Brado's Pizza for the food and the volunteers who cooked; the Essex County Sheriff Department for the beautiful center pieces; and the VFW for always being ready to help out.

Also, a huge thank you to Hoppy Curran and his group for providing the music.





POR DALIA DÍAZ  
daliadiaz@rumbonews.com

READ IT IN ENGLISH ON PAGE 16

## Desde Mi Esquina



**CARTAS AL EDITOR**  
**RUMBO**  
315 Mt. Vernon St.  
Lawrence MA 01843  
Email: Rumbo@rumbonews.com

Las cartas deben tener menos de 300 palabras de largo. Favor de incluir un número de teléfono o dirección electrónica para confirmar quién la envía.

### Interrupciones, falta de respeto, humillación y vergüenza

¡Bienvenidos a las reuniones del Concejo Municipal! Asegúrense de que sus hijos no estén mirando porque sólo aprenderán a ser desagradables y ofensivos con las personas, particularmente con los empleados de la ciudad.

Por supuesto, no son todos, pero se hace evidente que algunos no han leído nada sobre buenos modales, cortesía, decoro o respeto al tratar con los demás; podemos ver cualquiera de las reuniones del concejo o de los comités y siempre encontraremos algún reflejo de las cosas que mencioné, pero la reunión de la semana pasada se llevó el premio.

No sé cuál es el problema entre el presidente del concejo, Jeovanny Rodríguez, y el concejal del Distrito F, Marc Laplante, pero se podría cortar la tensión y el antagonismo con un cuchillo. Jeovanny es bastante insultante hacia Marc.

Incluso antes de que comenzaran a entrevistar a tres empleados para ser nombrados permanentemente en sus puestos, hubo una fea pelea entre ellos sobre la opinión versus los hechos mientras discutían sobre recibir informes de los departamentos trimestralmente o anualmente. Jeovanny habló largo y tendido sobre el tema, y Marc le dijo que esa era su opinión. Si hubiera querido hablar de su opinión, debió haberle pasado el mallette a la vicepresidenta Stephany Infante.

Jeovanny menospreció a Marc, le gritó y amenazó con cortarle el micrófono. Fue un momento muy embarazoso.

Comenzaron a entrevistar a los tres empleados en calidad de “interinos”. Habían sido interrogados durante la reunión del Comité de Personal la semana anterior. Sucede que la ciudad contrata o promueve a personas sabiendo que no tienen los requisitos para el trabajo, con la esperanza de que después de unos meses de capacitación, obtengan una buena evaluación y, por lo tanto, un nombramiento permanente.

La ordenanza en archivo puede decir que es necesario un título universitario, pero el anuncio de trabajo generalmente está diseñado a la medida de la persona que quieren contratar y muestra un diploma de escuela secundaria como su único requisito. Usan la táctica de contratarlos como “interinos” cuando pasan la tortura del ayuntamiento; pueden simplemente ceñirse a los requisitos de la ordenanza y no contratarlos.

Ninguno de los candidatos tenía la educación o la experiencia requerida, sin embargo, fueron nombrados. Aida Santana, subdirectora del DPW, no tenía la educación ni cinco años de experiencia y ganará entre \$100 mil y \$145 mil más el uso de un automóvil para llevar a casa. Stephany fue

la única que votó como Presente.

Awilda Pimentel, directora de Desarrollo Comunitario, hizo una muy buena presentación y tuvo la bendición de los concejales. Los concejales la trataron con respeto y cortesía.

Pero, cuando se trató de Rosanna Delrosario, subdirectora del DPW, la tensión era palpable. La concejala del Distrito B, Wendy Luzón, no podía pronunciar su nombre correctamente; la llamaba constantemente Sra. “Rosario”. El dominio del idioma inglés de Rosanna es excelente. Aunque no tenga un título universitario, es una asistente dental certificada y licenciada con una formación académica específica.

Rosanna también tiene cuatro años estudiando medicina en la República Dominicana, y este enero, comenzará los cursos universitarios para obtener su bachelors.

Después de haber sido la Coordinadora de Reciclaje durante casi tres años, adquirió mucha capacitación y trajo muchas subvenciones a la ciudad para su departamento. El día después de esa fatídica reunión, la ciudad recibió esta notificación: “La ciudad de Lawrence ha ganado 11 puntos y recibirá \$44,000. Su municipio también ha recibido \$250,000 en fondos para un Proyecto de Reducción de Residuos para una Instalación Permanente de Residuos Domésticos Peligrosos”. Rosanna solicitó esa subvención hace seis meses.

Luego, el concejal del Distrito F, Marc Laplante, explicó por qué no le iba a dar su voto. Hay una apariencia de impropiedad estando casada con el concejal del Distrito C, Gregory Delrosario, como si ella fuera a dar un trato preferencial a los residentes de su distrito. Agregó que su historial es confuso cuando dice que asiste a las reuniones del vecindario, y afirmó que la vio solo una vez.

El presidente del concejo, Jeovanny Rodríguez, se dio cuenta de eso, afirmando que el DPW no mostrará preferencia al servir a los concejales. En este punto, las lágrimas eran visibles en el rostro de Rosanna.

Aunque Wendy Luzón pidió darle una oportunidad a esta persona, el voto fue de Ana Levy, Wendy Luzón y Celina Reyes (SÍ); Marc Laplante y Jeovanny Rodríguez (NO); Fidelina Santiago (abstención); Stephany Infante y Vivian Marmol (presente).

La sensación de que todo era político fue, obviamente, una muestra repugnante de egoísmo y hasta de venganza.

Nadie me escuchará criticar una votación del concejo municipal, ya sea de SÍ o de NO. Los votamos en esos puestos para votar según su conciencia, sea como sea, pero votar “abstención” o “presente” no debería ser aceptable. Si están ahí, debe estar dispuesto a dar su opinión. Después de todo, los tres le hicieron a Rosanna muchas preguntas que los calificaron para tener una opinión y votar en consecuencia.

## Deshágase de los árboles de Navidad naturales con estos consejos de expertos

Ya sea que las personas que tengan árboles de Navidad naturales tengan la intención de mantenerlos durante un período corto o prolongado durante esta temporada navideña, los expertos en el cuidado de árboles de The Morton Arboretum recomiendan planificar con anticipación su eliminación adecuada una vez que se los quite.

“Los árboles de hoja perenne festivos iluminan los hogares durante la temporada navideña, pero no durarán para siempre”, dijo el gerente de la Clínica de plantas del Arboretum, Spencer Campbell. “Es fundamental desechar un árbol de manera segura y apropiada después de su uso para evitar un peligro de incendio”.

La Clínica de plantas del Arboretum brinda asesoramiento gratuito por correo electrónico para quienes tengan preguntas sobre cómo cuidar árboles y plantas, incluidos los árboles de Navidad. Campbell ofrece estas recomendaciones para la eliminación adecuada de los árboles:

1. Evite los incendios. Los árboles secos pueden convertirse rápidamente en peligros de incendio. Deseche un árbol tan pronto como muestre signos de secado. Las agujas secas se volverán quebradizas y comenzarán a caerse, y el árbol ya no absorberá agua. “Nunca quemé un árbol de hoja perenne en una chimenea o estufa de leña, ya que puede causar una acumulación que podría provocar un incendio en la chimenea”, advirtió Campbell.

2. Recicle. Los árboles de hoja perenne desnudos se pueden reciclar en las instalaciones participantes. Consulte con los municipios locales o las empresas de gestión de residuos sobre los acuerdos de reciclaje o eliminación de árboles, incluido cuándo y dónde se recogerán los árboles o si es necesario llevarlos a un sitio de reciclaje. Los árboles reciclados se triturarán en mantillo o compost. En algunos municipios, la gente puede recoger el mantillo de buen olor y esparcirlo en sus jardines.

3. Limpie las ramas. “Solo se puede reciclar el árbol en sí”, dijo Campbell. “Asegúrese de quitar todas las decoraciones. Si usa una bolsa de plástico para árboles para sacar el

árbol de la casa, quítela afuera”. Los árboles que no estén desnudos irán a un vertedero en lugar de reciclarse. Los árboles flocados, aquellos cubiertos de polvo sintético blanco que sugiere nieve, no se pueden reciclar. Deben tirarse a la basura normal. No recicle guirnaldas, coronas ni nada que contenga alambre, ya que podría dañar la maquinaria trituradora. Deseche esos artículos en la basura.

4. Tenga en cuenta su jardín. Las ramas cortadas de un árbol pueden ayudar a proteger las plantas en los jardines. Las ramas colocadas sobre los canchales aislarán el suelo para que no se caliente en los períodos cálidos del invierno y hagan que las plantas salgan prematuramente de la latencia. Esto es más útil en cancheros a pleno sol.

5. Dé una mano a la vida silvestre. “Si el espacio lo permite, y a los vecinos no les importa, deje el árbol en su patio trasero para brindar refugio a los pájaros y otros animales durante el invierno”, dijo Campbell. Las personas también pueden colocar el tronco en un estanque en su propiedad privada para brindar refugio a los peces.

La Clínica de Plantas del Arboreto Morton está generosamente patrocinada por Bartlett Tree Experts.

### Acerca del Arboreto Morton

El Arboreto Morton es un líder mundialmente reconocido en investigación y educación sobre árboles. En su predio de 1700 acres se conservan 106 714 especímenes que representan 4067 tipos diferentes de plantas. El Centro de Ciencias Arbóreas del Arboreto, el Programa Global de Conservación de Árboles, la Iniciativa de Árboles de la Región de Chicago y el Centro para la Supervivencia de Especies: Los árboles están contribuyendo con conocimientos científicos y experiencia técnica para asegurar el futuro de los árboles a nivel local, nacional y mundial. Puede encontrar información sobre el trabajo científico del Arboreto y cómo contribuye a un mundo más verde y saludable donde las personas y los árboles prosperen juntos en mortonarb.org.



Si quiere saber  
quien lo controla,  
mire a quién no le  
permite que lo critique.

– Voltaire

AZ QUOTES

“Nuestra libertad depende de la libertad de prensa y no puede ser limitada pues la perderemos.”

- Thomas Jefferson



# Healey-Driscoll Administration Announces Housing Development Incentive Awards to Create 1,256 Units, Lower Costs

*Largest Funding Year in Program History is a Result of Governor Healey's Tax Cuts Package*

LAWRENCE — Governor Maura Healey, Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll and Housing and Livable Communities Secretary Ed Augustus announced \$27 million in Housing Development Incentive Program (HDIP) awards to create 709 total new units in 9 Gateway Cities across the state. This funding is in addition to the \$27 million in HDIP funding awarded earlier this year. Together, HDIP awards made by the Healey-Driscoll Administration in 2024 will support the creation of 1,256 new housing units.

As part of a \$1 billion tax package signed by the Governor in October 2023, the annual HDIP program cap was raised to \$30 million annually with a one-time increase of \$57 million. That increase allowed the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities to fund 25 projects in 15 Gateway Cities this year.

The announcement was made at the JAV in Lawrence, a 24-unit development by Jowamar Companies LLC now under construction after receiving an HDIP award from the Healey-Driscoll Administration earlier this year. The award helped enable the transformation of the formerly blighted property into housing, commercial spaces and a food hall.

“We want people to be able to afford to live and work in our Gateway Cities, which have so much to offer in business, industry, arts and culture,” said Governor Healey. “The HDIP program has a proven record of supporting the creation of new housing, like the Jav development, which can lower the cost of housing in these communities. We were proud to expand this program in our tax cuts package, which has enabled us to award the largest amount of funding to date.”

“These funds make a sizable impact to cities across the state as we work

to increase housing of all kinds across Massachusetts to make rent and home prices more affordable,” said Lieutenant Governor Driscoll. “This is the largest funding year in program history and really underscores our administration’s commitment to building more housing and building it faster to meet the demand.”

HDIP is a tool for the state’s Gateway Cities to create more market rate housing to support economic development, expand the diversity of the housing stock and create more vibrant neighborhoods. Half of the 12 projects awarded today will support the revitalization of old mills or commercial properties into housing.

“Our Gateway Cities are resilient communities that continue to adapt and evolve with every generation,” said Housing and Livable Communities Secretary Augustus. “These developments awarded today not only create much needed housing, they revitalize neighborhoods, revive long-vacant buildings and strengthen our communities.”

The HDIP awards are one part of the Healey-Driscoll Administration’s comprehensive approach to housing, which includes the \$5.12 billion Affordable Homes Act, implementation of the MBTA Communities Law, increases to the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit and the work of both the Housing Advisory Council and the Unlocking Housing Production Commission.

“Housing is not just about building structures; it’s about creating stability, opportunity, and a sense of community for families here in Lawrence and across the Commonwealth,” said Lawrence Mayor Brian DePeña. “With Governor Healey’s leadership and initiatives to increase housing affordability and accessibility, we can work together to deliver real solutions that make a lasting difference.”



- Below are the 12 awardees:**
- 193-197 Union - New Bedford**
    - Sponsor: OneCircle
    - HDIP award: \$2,500,000
    - Total units: 45
  - Iver Mills - Fitchburg**
    - Sponsor: Rich Darche and Aldo Mazzaferro
    - HDIP award: \$2,500,000
    - Total units: 96
  - 347-355 Main Street - Fitchburg**
    - Sponsor: Paul Tocci
    - HDIP award: \$479,081
    - Total units: 8
  - 266 Canal Street - Salem**
    - Sponsor: Criterion Development Partners
    - HDIP award: \$2,500,000
    - Total units: 250
  - Essex Street Lofts - Haverhill**
    - Sponsor: RISE
    - HDIP award: \$2,500,000
    - Total units: 42
  - Bay View - Salem**
    - Sponsor: Juniper Point
    - HDIP award: \$2,000,000
    - Total units: 13
  - Open Square - Holyoke**
    - Sponsor: Open Square Realty
    - HDIP award: \$2,500,000
    - Total units: 84
  - 12 Porter Street - Taunton**
    - Sponsor: 12 Porter Street Development
    - HDIP award: \$2,000,000
    - Total units: 28
  - Flats on Barnstable Road - Hyannis**
    - Sponsor: Tim Telman/Brad Sprinkle
    - HDIP award: \$2,500,000
    - Total units: 45
  - 204 Main - Worcester**
    - Sponsor: Menkiti Group
    - HDIP award: \$2,500,000
    - Total units: 20
  - ICONO - Lawrence**
    - Sponsor: Johan Lopez
    - HDIP award: \$2,500,000
    - Total units: 60

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# La administración Healey-Driscoll anuncia premios de incentivos para el desarrollo de viviendas para crear 1256 unidades y reducir los costos

*El año de mayor financiamiento en la historia del programa es resultado del paquete de recortes de impuestos de la gobernadora Healey*

La gobernadora Maura Healey, la vicegobernadora Kim Driscoll y el secretario de Vivienda y Comunidades Habitables, Ed Augustus, anunciaron premios del Programa de Incentivos para el Desarrollo de Viviendas (HDIP) por \$27 millones para crear un total de 709 unidades nuevas en 9 ciudades de acceso en todo el estado. Esta financiación se suma a los \$27 millones en fondos HDIP otorgados a principios de este año. En conjunto, los premios HDIP otorgados por la administración Healey-Driscoll en 2024 respaldarán la creación de 1256 nuevas unidades de vivienda.

Como parte de un paquete de impuestos de \$1 mil millones firmado por la gobernadora en octubre de 2023, el límite anual del programa HDIP se elevó a \$30 millones anuales con un aumento único de \$57 millones. Ese aumento le permitió a la Oficina Ejecutiva de Vivienda y Comunidades Habitables financiar 25 proyectos en 15 Ciudades de Acceso este año.

El anuncio se hizo en el JAV en Lawrence, un desarrollo de 24 unidades de Jowamar Companies LLC que ahora está en construcción después de recibir un premio HDIP de la Administración Healey-Driscoll a principios de este año. El premio ayudó a permitir la transformación de la propiedad anteriormente deteriorada en viviendas, espacios comerciales y un salón de comidas.

“Queremos que la gente pueda vivir y trabajar en nuestras Ciudades de Acceso, que tienen tanto que ofrecer en negocios, industria, arte y cultura”, dijo la Gobernadora Healey. “El programa HDIP tiene un historial probado de apoyo a la creación de nuevas viviendas, como el desarrollo JAV, que puede reducir el costo de la vivienda en estas comunidades. Estábamos orgullosos de ampliar este programa en nuestro paquete de recortes de impuestos, lo que nos ha permitido otorgar la mayor cantidad de fondos hasta la fecha”.

“Estos fondos tienen un impacto considerable en las ciudades de todo el estado, ya que trabajamos para aumentar la vivienda de todo tipo en Massachusetts

para que los precios de los alquileres y las viviendas sean más asequibles”, dijo la vicegobernadora Driscoll. “Este es el año de financiación más grande en la historia del programa y realmente subraya el compromiso de nuestra administración de construir más viviendas y construirlas más rápido para satisfacer la demanda”.

El HDIP es una herramienta para que las ciudades de acceso del estado (Gateway Cities) creen más viviendas a precio de mercado para apoyar el desarrollo económico, ampliar la diversidad de viviendas y crear vecindarios más vibrantes. La mitad de los 12 proyectos otorgados hoy respaldarán la revitalización de antiguos fábricas o propiedades comerciales para convertirlas en viviendas.

“Nuestras ciudades de acceso son comunidades resilientes que continúan adaptándose y evolucionando con cada generación”, dijo el secretario de Vivienda y Comunidades Habitables, Augustus. “Estos desarrollos otorgados hoy no solo crean viviendas muy necesarias, sino que revitalizan vecindarios, reviven edificios que estuvieron vacíos durante mucho tiempo y fortalecen nuestras comunidades”.

Los premios HDIP son una parte del enfoque integral de la Administración Healey-Driscoll en materia de vivienda, que incluye la Ley de Viviendas Asequibles de \$5.12 billones, la implementación de la Ley de Comunidades de MBTA, aumentos al Crédito Fiscal para Viviendas de Bajos Ingresos y el trabajo tanto del Concejo Asesor de Vivienda como de la Comisión para el Desbloqueo de la Producción de Viviendas.

“La vivienda no se trata solo de construir estructuras; se trata de crear estabilidad, oportunidades y un sentido de comunidad para las familias aquí en Lawrence y en todo el estado”, dijo el alcalde de Lawrence, Brian DePeña. “Con el liderazgo y las iniciativas de la gobernadora Healey para aumentar la asequibilidad y la accesibilidad de la vivienda, podemos trabajar juntos para ofrecer soluciones reales que marquen una diferencia duradera”.



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## Father Almono's Retirement Mass



The City of Lawrence is deeply honored and grateful for Father Joel Almono's more than 18 years of dedicated service and unwavering support. As he embarks on this well-deserved new chapter of retirement, Lawrence will forever hold him in the highest regard. His impact on our community is immeasurable, and we will always be thankful for his guidance and

compassion.

A heartfelt thank you to the State Delegation, City Councilors, and every member of the community who came together to honor and celebrate this special moment for Father Joel Almono.

Mayor,  
Brian A. DePeña



## Una mirada a nuestro sistema de salud: ¿Por qué está roto?



Las compañías de seguros médicos aumentan sus ganancias negándose sistemáticamente a pagar la asistencia cuando más la necesitamos.

### Por Domenico Romero

Por todo Estados Unidos estamos escuchando historias de cómo compañías de seguros de salud con fines de lucro están negaron la atención médica. A raíz de un acto de violencia armada, un torrente de dolor, frustración e ira han alcanzado un punto crítico que hace que algunos medios de comunicación se pregunten: "¿Es este un momento de Occupy Wall Street?".

Hace unas semanas, el país entero quedó conmocionado por el trágico asesinato de Brian Thompson, CEO de UnitedHealthcare. Desde People's Action, condenamos este acto de violencia armada sin sentido y señalamos una realidad innegable: nuestro país enfrenta una doble crisis devastadora, una epidemia de violencia armada y un sistema de salud que sigue fallándonos. Ambas problemáticas requieren acciones urgentes, pero hoy quiero centrarme en una de ellas: la crisis de nuestro sistema de salud y la atención médica.

La salud es un derecho humano que debe estar garantizado para todos, pero el sistema de salud de Estados Unidos no asegura una cobertura universal para toda la población. A pesar de que el gasto en salud por persona y como porcentaje del PIB es significativamente mayor que en otros países de renta alta, EE. UU. continúa siendo el único país desarrollado que no ofrece cobertura sanitaria universal.

Aunque el gobierno financia programas como Medicare y Medicaid, desde 1997, los republicanos en el Congreso abrieron las puertas a las aseguradoras privadas para gestionar estos planes. Hoy en día, estas compañías administran más de la mitad de las pólizas de Medicare, y los llamados planes privados "Medicare Advantage" no solo brindan menos beneficios a los pacientes, sino que también imponen un costo mayor a los contribuyentes.

En otras palabras, aunque 9 de cada 10 personas en Estados Unidos tienen seguro médico, esto no asegura que tengamos acceso a la atención médica que podríamos llegar a requerir ¿Por qué? Porque las aseguradoras privadas, motivadas por la codicia, priorizan sus ganancias por sobre la salud y el bienestar de la población. Este es su principal incentivo para negar la atención médica necesaria a millones de

estadounidenses. Y para muchos, esto no es solo un inconveniente, sino una cuestión de vida o muerte.

Las barreras impuestas por las aseguradoras privadas incluyen retrasos en las llamadas autorizaciones previas, lo cual representa un aumento constante de los gastos directos que los pacientes deben afrontar, planes con deducibles elevados y un acceso limitado a proveedores que reduce las opciones para ciertos tratamientos y obliga a los pacientes a buscar alternativas fuera de la red. Todo esto provoca que las personas se encuentren atrapadas con facturas impagables, tengan que recortar dinero destinado a necesidades esenciales como el alquiler y la comida y en el peor de los casos, terminen en bancarrota.

Cuando las compañías que deberían estar comprometidas con el cuidado de nuestra salud priorizan los márgenes de ganancia y los intereses de los accionistas sobre el bienestar de sus pacientes es evidente que tenemos un sistema que premia la negación de atención médica en lugar de ofrecerla. Además, los procesos de apelación para garantizar el acceso a los cuidados necesarios son largos, complejos y opacos.

Por esta razón, People's Action Institute lanzó la campaña Care Over Cost, cuyo objetivo es apoyar y guiar a las personas a las que se les ha negado atención médica, ayudándolas a reclamar los cuidados necesarios para su salud. Con esta iniciativa, buscamos crear un movimiento no violento, democrático y efectivo que impulse un cambio en el sistema, asegurando que todas las personas reciban la atención que los médicos, especialistas y proveedores consideran indispensable.

En People's Action estamos convencidos de que todas las personas merecen acceso a la atención médica de calidad. Por eso, seguiremos organizándonos y luchando para recuperar el derecho que las aseguradoras privadas nos han arrebatado y no pararemos hasta garantizar que sea una realidad para todos.

*Domenico Romero es Portavoz de la campaña Care Over Cost y Jefe de Estrategia y Alianzas en People's Action Institute, una red de organizaciones comunitarias en 38 estados con más de un millón de miembros.*



## La migración internacional neta impulsa el mayor crecimiento de población de los EE. UU. en décadas

19 DE DICIEMBRE DE 2024 — La población de los EE. UU. aumentó casi un 1.0 % entre el 2023 y el 2024, de acuerdo con las nuevas Estimaciones de población de la edición del 2024 que publicó hoy la Oficina del Censo de los EE. UU.

Con el más rápido crecimiento de población anual desde el 2001, la población del país sobrepasa ahora los 340 millones de habitantes. Este fue un incremento notable comparado con el bajo crecimiento récord del 0.2 % en el 2021. El crecimiento estuvo impulsado principalmente por el aumento de la migración internacional neta.

La migración internacional neta,

que se entiende como cualquier cambio de lugar de residencia que implique cruzar las fronteras de los EE. UU. (los 50 estados y el Distrito de Columbia), fue el componente demográfico crucial del cambio que impulsó el incremento de la población del país. Con un aumento neto de 2.8 millones de personas, el cambio constituyó el 84 % del incremento de 3.3 millones de habitantes que tuvo la población del país entre el 2023 y el 2024. Esto refleja una tendencia continua de aumento de la migración internacional, con un incremento neto de 1.7 millones en el 2022 y 2.3 millones en el 2023.

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"Friendship... is not something you learn in school. But if you haven't learned the meaning of friendship, you really haven't learned anything."  
**MUHAMMAD ALI**



# Lowell High Class of '74 establishes Legacy Scholarship with Greater Lowell Community Foundation

Lowell, MA – Lowell High School (LHS) Class of 1974 recently celebrated its 50th Reunion with 160 classmates gathering to reminisce and to fulfill a longstanding goal: Establish a permanent class scholarship fund under the stewardship of the Greater Lowell Community Foundation (GLCF) to endow four, \$500 scholarships in perpetuity for deserving LHS students.

With a goal of raising \$40,000, the Class of '74 Legacy Scholarship Fund is well on its way. The reunion event raised a total of \$30,000 from silent auctions, raffles and class members' donations including a generous matching challenge of \$10,000 from Marty Meehan '74, President of the University of Massachusetts system. That challenge was met by two classmates' donations of \$5,000.

Reunion Committee member Joe Regan remarked on the consensus of the group to move forward with a permanent class scholarship, saying "We felt that it would be a great thing to assist current graduates with these scholarships. Fifty years ago, there was not much available to the class of 1974 graduates and we all agreed it would have helped many of us."

GLCF President and CEO Jay Linnehan echoed that sentiment adding, "These scholarships are not just an investment in our Lowell High students' futures; they reflect the caliber of Lowell High graduates. LHS students who apply for scholarships are evaluated on academic, extracurricular, volunteer, athletic, and personal character achievements. In 2024, fifty-one percent of the students receiving LHS scholarships

were first in their families to go to college."

The Class of 1974 Reunion Committee included Diane Brouillette McLeod, Sharon Styman Lussier, Barbara Jezak, Marcia Dolce, Joe Regan, Terrance Gormley, Betsy O'Brien, Brenda Maille, Steve Carignan, Vinnie Lombard and Carol Keirstead. Additional donations to the Lowell High Class of 1974 Scholarship Fund can be made securely online at LHS Class of '74 Legacy Fund.

GLCF provides opportunities for donors and reunion classes to create a scholarship fund and establish a lasting charitable legacy. To learn more about these empowering opportunities at GLCF, contact Jay Linnehan or to learn more about creating your own LHS Legacy Scholarship, contact Barbara Dunsford at 978-970-1600 or [info@glcfoundation.org](mailto:info@glcfoundation.org).

## About Greater Lowell Community Foundation

Established in 1997, the Greater Lowell Community Foundation (GLCF) is a philanthropic organization comprised of more than 450 funds dedicated to improving the quality of life in 21 neighboring cities and towns. With financial assets of nearly \$65 million, GLCF annually awards grants and scholarships to hundreds of worthy nonprofits and students. It is powered by the winning combination of donor-directed giving, personal attention from Foundation staff, and an in-depth understanding of local needs. The generosity of our donors has enabled the Community Foundation to award more than \$40 million to the Greater Lowell community.



LHS Class of 1974 recently gathered to celebrate its 50th Reunion and to fulfill a longstanding goal: establish a permanent class scholarship fund. LHS Class of 1974 members, from left: Joe Regan, Sharon Styman Lussier, and Marianne Nunnery.

## BBB Scam Alert: 'Tis the season to donate, and scammers are taking advantage

With so many purchases during the holiday season, it can be easy to miss a fraudulent credit card charge or two – especially if it appears to be from a charity. Keep a close eye on your credit card statement this time of year.

### How the scam works

You review your credit card statement and notice charitable donations that you don't remember making. No, it's not a memory lapse; you were a victim of credit card fraud.

These unauthorized charity charges may be part of a bigger con, which started when scammers got your credit card information. Your card details may have been shared in a scam or as part of a data breach. After getting your credit card details, scammers now need to check whether they are still valid. To do this, scammers often use charity websites to test the stolen numbers. Scammers do this because they can test with very small donations that are less likely to be disputed. When the charges go through, the scammer knows that your card details are still valid. Then, they will use your card for bigger purchases or cash advances.

In one recent example, one person reported to BBB Scam Tracker that they were approached by two men claiming to raise funds for a child needing medical services. The person was told they would only be charged \$20, but was actually charged \$2400.

One person reported to BBB Scam Tracker that after making a purchase from a questionable discount website, their debit card "was pinged for fraudulent charges ranging from \$2 to \$29 then finally \$67 for a charity. I've had to cancel my debit card, order a new one and block my account." If you notice unexpected donation charges, be sure to report them immediately. With about 20% of charitable giving happening in December, this con is particularly easy to miss during the holiday season.

### How to avoid unauthorized credit card scams

- Report any questionable charges immediately. Don't wait until a scammer charges hundreds of dollars to your card. Contact the Fraud Department for your

card issuer; you'll be issued a new card, and your old card number will be unusable for scammers to exploit. Be sure to select a new PIN number as well.

- Keep a close eye on charges made to your account. Regularly review your credit card statements and do not discard them. Contact your bank or credit card company immediately if you spot any charges that you do not recognize.

- Protect sensitive personal information. Don't make purchases from suspicious online businesses, and stay alert to phishing scams that claim to need your credit or debit card information. Be sure to maintain updated anti-malware software and a firewall on your computer. Only use secure browsers and shop from secure, trusted sites – while not a guarantee, check for the lock symbol in the corner and the "s" after "http" before sharing your information. Never enter payment information into a website until you are sure you're dealing with a trustworthy business. Check for the site's privacy and security policies; how are they protecting your information (e.g., encryption) and with whom are they sharing it?

- Use your credit card when making online purchases. Credit cards generally offer more protection against fraud; you have the right to challenge any unauthorized charges on your account and the card issuer has an obligation to credit such unauthorized charges back to your account upon timely notice and confirmation. Any demands for payment through wire transfer or gift cards are huge red flags – just walk away.

### For more information

- Read the BBB Tip: 10 steps to avoid scams.
- Learn more about your rights and responsibilities when it comes to stolen credit card details.

For additional tips on charity fraud, visit BBB's [Give.org](http://Give.org), the standards-based charity evaluator. Get BBB's tips for donors. If you've been the victim of a credit card scam, report it at [BBB.org/ScamTracker](http://BBB.org/ScamTracker). Your report goes a long way toward building public awareness about common scam tactics.

"What sweetness is left in life, if you take away friendship? Robbing life of friendship is like robbing the world of the sun. A true friend is more to be esteemed than kinsfolk."

CICERO

## Accelerated Options Help Students Finish Their Degree Faster at MCC

To help students complete their program faster and get the most for their time, Middlesex Community College offers accelerated options. This includes Mini-mesters and a Wintersession as part of the Spring 2025 semester, starting on Thursday, January 2, 2025.

"Starting at MCC is one of the best ways to save time and money with flexible course formats and the availability of free college offered by the state," said Jennifer Migliozi, MCC's Assistant Dean of Admissions. "We have options to help fit education into your life, whether you're planning to transfer to a four-year institution, enter the workforce, or advance in your career. This flexibility can make a huge difference in your ability to complete a degree, certificate or industry credential."

MCC's three-week Wintersession provides students with an early start to the Spring semester. Students can keep up their momentum or jumpstart their education without having to take a long break between semesters. While most other schools are closed, students can complete their general education requirements and earn transferable college credits.

Offered twice each in the fall and spring, MCC's eight-week Mini-mesters

make it easier for students to balance an education with their professional and personal responsibilities. The shorter schedule allows students to take more classes throughout the semester, keeping them on track to reach their goals faster.

All Wintersession and Mini-mester courses offer the same content, academic standards and number of instructional hours as classes during the traditional 15-week semester. Combined with a choice of on-campus, online, hybrid and hyflex course formats, MCC's accelerated sessions make getting an education easier.

No matter a student's age or income, community college is now free in Massachusetts! The MassEducate and MassReconnect programs allow at Massachusetts residents who have not yet earned a bachelor's degree to attend MCC for free.

"The Spring 2025 semester will feature a variety of classes, support services and resources to help you reach your goals," Migliozi said. "Register now and get an early start!"

Visit <https://www.middlesex.edu/registration/index.html> or call 1-800-818-3434 for more information or to register for MCC's Spring 2025 semester and Wintersession.



# Healey-Driscoll Administration Awards Over \$11 Million to Prevent Youth Violence

## Annual Grant Program Offers New Funding for Initiatives in Public Housing

The Healey-Driscoll Administration announced funding awarded through the Charles E. Shannon Jr. Community Safety Initiative, including new funds to support violence prevention in public housing sites. The grant program is an important tool in helping communities build collaborative programs to improve safety and reduce gang activity.

“Preventing violence among young people is critical to ensuring the future wellbeing of our youth and the safety of our communities,” said Governor Maura Healey. “This work requires collaboration among law enforcement, state and local officials, youth-serving nonprofits, and research partners to help ensure funds have the greatest positive impact. The partnerships built through the Shannon Community Safety Initiative are among the strongest tools we have to prevent youth and gang-related violence in Massachusetts.”

“The lasting success of grant-funded program sites demonstrates the remarkable outcomes we can achieve when collaborating to support our youth,” said Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll. “Each program site has forged strong partnerships across disciplines while applying evidence-based approaches to ensure young people can access beneficial programming and essential services that enhance their wellbeing and ensure the safety of Massachusetts communities.”

The FY25 Shannon Community Safety Initiative (Shannon CSI) is a state-funded grant program that awards yearly funds to support regional, multi-disciplinary program sites that take collaborative and evidence-based approaches to reduce youth and gang violence. The funds are managed and administered by the Office of Grants and Research (OGR). A total of 15 program sites were awarded grants totaling approximately \$11,179,673. Each program site will receive support from a Local Action Research Partner (LARP), which will assist with strategic planning, critical analysis and continuous feedback to support program operations and ensure that funded programs remain within scope, on schedule and within budget. Researchers interested in serving as a LARP were required to submit applications separate from the Shannon CSI program site applicants. The selected LARPs will share approximately \$785,543 in additional funding.

This marks the first year the Shannon

CSI has incorporated the new Housing Site Initiative, which allocates a portion of the program’s funds to support violence prevention in publicly funded housing. In accordance with the Legislative language authorizing the Shannon CSI, housing sites that have been subject to enforcement actions by the US Department of Justice were given preference for this funding.

“Youth violence significantly affects victims, their families, and entire communities. Building strong partnerships and implementing collaborative, results-oriented solutions are the most effective ways to tackle the complex issues that contribute to gun violence,” said Secretary of Public Safety and Security Terrence Reidy. “The Shannon CSI reflects the administration’s deep commitment to offering resources that support the steadfast efforts and community collaborations aimed at enhancing safety, decreasing gun violence, and fostering youth engagement.”

The Shannon CSI incorporates key elements of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) Comprehensive Gang Model. It utilizes a multi-pronged approach to gang violence prevention, which includes providing social interventions, suppressing acts of violence, providing positive opportunities, creating organizational change and mobilizing communities to prevent and reduce gang activity.

The annual grant program has been proven successful in addressing violence in communities experiencing high rates of gang activity. The program’s Statewide Research Partner (SRP), Northeastern University, earlier this year released a statewide brief as well as site-specific findings highlighting the program’s success in 2023. The SRP is also funded through Shannon CSI and is selected through a competitive application process each year. The SRP application process has not yet opened.

“This program utilizes nationally recognized best practices to support youth and communities that are impacted by gang violence. By partnering nonprofits, police, public housing officials and other local leaders with researchers and support from the Office of Grants and Research, we’ve achieved long term success preventing youth violence in Massachusetts communities,” said OGR Executive Director Kevin Stanton.

### The following cities were awarded FY25 Shannon CSI funding:

Funded Program Site	Total Award Amount (including Housing Site Initiative Funding)	Housing Site Initiative Funding
Boston/Brookline	\$1,735,107	\$61,104
Brockton	\$775,475	\$26,184
Fall River	\$653,973	---
Fitchburg/Gardner	\$479,882	\$21,184
Haverhill/Methuen	\$310,466	---
Holyoke/Chicopee	\$606,446	\$56,599
Lawrence	\$299,866	---
Lowell	\$790,957	\$13,334
Lynn	\$446,354	\$69,421
Metro Mayors Coalition (Braintree, Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Malden, Quincy, Revere, Somerville, and Winthrop in partnership with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council)	\$815,703	\$58,404
New Bedford	\$1,168,615	\$48,434
Pittsfield	\$439,015	\$23,324
Springfield	\$1,247,411	---
Taunton	\$161,352	\$22,009
Worcester	\$1,249,043	---

Program sites will receive support from the following research partners, who were awarded funds through the FY25 Shannon CSI LARP program:

Local Action Research Partner	Shannon Partner Site	Award Amount
Boston University	Metro Mayors Coalition	\$61,806
Bridgewater State University	Brockton	\$67,587
CERTE INC, Amherst	Holyoke/Chicopee	\$77,550
Clark University, Worcester	Worcester	\$66,554
Crime and Justice Institute, Boston	Fall River	\$66,394
Kelley Research Associates, Norwell	Taunton	\$25,200
North Shore Community College, Danvers	Lynn	\$42,000
Northeastern University, Boston	Boston/Brookline	\$66,641
Salem State University	Springfield	\$46,475
Sean Varano, Kingston	New Bedford	\$43,834
UMASS Chan Med School, Worcester	Fitchburg/Gardner	\$56,511
University of Massachusetts, Lowell	Lowell	\$59,327
University of Massachusetts, Lowell	Lawrence	\$36,680
University of Massachusetts, Lowell	Haverhill/Methuen	\$36,680
Westfield State University	Pittsfield	\$32,300



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**Si tienes ropa usada y pequeños artículos del hogar que ya no usas, dónalos para quienes si los necesitan. Llegaremos a tu puerta para recibir lo que puedas entregar.**

**Para programar una cita, llama al 1.800.483.5503 o visítanos en nuestra página web en internet: [www.bbbsfoundation.org](http://www.bbbsfoundation.org).**

**Lo que nos entregues ayudará a los niños locales que participan en nuestro programa de tutoría. Debes saber que tu donación es deducible de impuestos.**

**¡Gracias por tu apoyo!**





# MVCC Hosts Annual Holiday Party

We are so grateful to everyone who joined us for the Sold Out Merrimack Valley Chamber Annual Holiday Party earlier this month at Salvatore's!

The evening was filled with joy and holiday spirit, featuring: A delightful Wine Tasting; A delicious dinner; A stunning Fashion Show; Dancing and entertainment; Festive Holiday Auction; A special visit from Santa ...and so much more!



# Merrimack Valley Chamber hosts Toy Drive



A heartfelt thank you to everyone who attended the Merrimack Valley Chamber Toy Drive at China Blossom. The response was overwhelming, and we deeply appreciate each and every one of you who brought a toy to help brighten the holidays for those in need.

### Special thanks to our incredible partners:

- Thrivent Financial - Robert Cerniglia, our gracious host
- LukeJackson Benefit and HR Solutions, our generous sponsor
- Clarendon, who will ensure the toys reach those who need them most
- China Blossom, for providing the perfect venue

Your generosity and support make a world of difference. Together, we're spreading holiday cheer to those who need it most!

**MERRIMACK VALLEY  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**



**NEW YEARS  
NETWORKING  
MIXER**

Join us for the MVCC Annual New Year's Mixer at The Tap! Enjoy complimentary appetizers, cash bar, networking, and a chance to win a door prize!

-  **Tues. January 7th, 2025**
-  **5:00 - 7:00 PM**
-  **The Tap**  
100 Washington St  
Haverhill, MA 01832

**To Register: Call the  
MVCC: (978) 686-0900 or  
Register with Secure  
Credit Card Online at:  
MerrimackValleyChamber.com**

**Contact The MVCC for Sponsorship Opportunities  
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“Aléjate de aquellas personas que intentan menospreciar tus ambiciones. Las mentes pequeñas siempre harán eso, pero las mentes grandes te darán la sensación de que tú también puedes llegar a ser grande”.

\*\*\*\*\*

"Stay away from those people who try to disparage your ambitions. Small minds will always do that, but great minds will give you a feeling that you can become great too."

- Mark Twain



# Consejos de Seguridad: Mantén la magia de las fiestas navideñas y protege a tu mascota

Los dueños de mascotas pueden disfrutar de una temporada navideña sin estrés con un poco de preparación



Es temporada de celebraciones alegres y momentos conmovedores con seres queridos, pero para los perros y gatos en casa, las fiestas pueden presentar algunos peligros inesperados. Nada arruina más el espíritu navideño que una mascota enferma o herida. Sin embargo, no hay necesidad de preocuparse: con unas simples precauciones de seguridad, esta época especial del año puede seguir siendo festiva y divertida para todos.

Para ayudar a los dueños de mascotas a mantener la alegría y la magia de las fiestas, Best Friends Animal Society, una organización líder en bienestar animal que trabaja para acabar con el sacrificio de perros y gatos en los albergues de los Estados Unidos y lograr un país sin sacrificios para el 2025, recomienda seguir estos pasos:

- ¿Optaste por un árbol de Navidad real? Usa una falda de árbol para mantener a los perros y gatos alejados del agua en la base, ya que puede contener savia de pino – tóxica para las mascotas – y bacterias dañinas.
- Asegura decoraciones grandes, como árboles de Navidad, a una pared o al techo para evitar que las mascotas las derriben y se lastimen (o lastimen a otros).
- ¿Terminaste de decorar? Revisa cuidadosamente el suelo para recoger cualquier oropel, cinta y ganchos de ornamentos. Estos artículos brillantes pueden atraer a las mascotas, pero ingerirlos puede causar problemas graves, incluso requerir cirugía.
- Mantén los alimentos humanos fuera del alcance de las mascotas. Las golosinas humanas pueden ser peligrosas para los perros y gatos, especialmente clásicos

navideños como el alcohol, el chocolate y las pasas.

- Las plantas festivas, como las pastoras y el muérdago, son peligrosas si las ingieren. Mantén las plantas navideñas fuera del alcance o considera comprar versiones artificiales.
- Las velas decorativas pueden ser peligrosas para perros y gatos, ya que fácilmente pueden derribarlas. Coloca velas en lugares inaccesibles para tu mascota y nunca dejes velas encendidas sin supervisión.
- Los nuevos sonidos y rostros pueden provocar nervios en las mascotas durante las fiestas. Si un perro o gato parece inquieto, considera colocarlo en una habitación tranquila y con luz tenue. Además, asegúrate de que sus identificaciones y microchips estén actualizados en caso de que se escapen.
- ¿Buscas añadir más alegría a tu hogar esta temporada? Considera adoptar un perro o gato de un albergue local o rescate, en lugar de comprar en criaderos o tiendas de mascotas. Si no puedes adoptar en este momento, acoger temporalmente a un perro o gato es otra forma de ayudar a salvar vidas. Para encontrar un albergue o rescatista local cerca de tu casa, visita [salvaunamascota.org](http://salvaunamascota.org).

## Información sobre Best Friends Animal Society

Best Friends Animal Society es la organización líder en bienestar animal, que trabaja para lograr que para el año 2025 se haya puesto fin a la práctica de sacrificar perros y gatos en los albergues de los Estados Unidos. Fundada en 1984, Best Friends es pionera en el movimiento “no-kill” y ha ayudado a reducir la cantidad de animales sacrificados en los albergues, de aproximadamente 17 millones por año a 415,000. Best Friends lleva a cabo programas que salvan vidas en todo el país y tiene el santuario más grande del país. Trabajando en forma conjunta con una red de alrededor de 4,800 socios dedicados a promover el bienestar animal, Best Friends está trabajando para salvar a todas las mascotas, Save Them All®. Para más información, visita [SalvaUnaMascota.org](http://SalvaUnaMascota.org).

## Redes sociales

Facebook: @bestfriendsanimalsocietyespanol  
Instagram: bestfriends\_enespanol

**Merrimack Valley Chamber of Commerce**

# MAYORS & MANAGERS FORUM 2025

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[office@merrimackvalleychamber.com](mailto:office@merrimackvalleychamber.com)

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Kim Driscoll

CONFIRMED  
**Amesbury Mayor**  
Kassandra Gove

CONFIRMED  
**Andover Town Manager**  
Andrew Flanagan

CONFIRMED  
**Haverhill Mayor**  
Melinda Barrett

INVITED  
**Lawrence Mayor**  
Brian DePena

INVITED  
**Methuen Mayor** TBD

INVITED  
**Newburyport Mayor**  
Sean Reardon

CONFIRMED  
**North Andover Town Manager**  
Melissa Rodrigues

## Merrimack Valley Chamber

# Next Generation Leaders Networking Night at Bosa!

Join us at the MVCC Next Generation Leaders Networking Night at BOSA! Connect with young people in business. Don't miss out!

**Wednesday, January 15, 2025 5:00 - 7:00 PM**

**Bosa**  
160 Merrimack Street  
Haverhill, MA 01830

**Registration Info:**  
[merrimackvalleychamber.com](http://merrimackvalleychamber.com)  
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# Navidad



Por Tomás Núñez, ThD

Cada vez que nace un niño es señal de que Dios todavía cree en el ser humano.

Estamos en época de Navidad, pero el aura no es de Navidad, sino más bien de Viernes Santo. Tantas son las crisis, los ataques terroristas, las guerras que las potencias belicosas y militaristas que destruyen vidas y dan muerte espantosa de civiles y niños, como muestran los medios de comunicación frecuentemente, vivimos una atmósfera contaminada de rencores y espíritu de venganza en la política mundial, por no hablar de los niveles astronómicos de corrupción: todo esto apaga las luces de Navidad y ensombrece los pinos que deberían crear el ambiente de alegría y de inocencia infantil que todavía existe en toda persona humana.

Quién pueda ver la película Niños Invisibles, en siete escenas diferentes, dirigidas por directores de renombre como Spike Lee, Katia Lund, John Woo, entre otros, puede darse cuenta de las vidas destruidas de los niños en muchas partes del mundo, condenados a vivir de la basura y en la basura; y sin embargo, hay escenas conmovedoras de camaradería, de pequeñas alegrías en los ojos tristes, y de solidaridad entre ellos.

Y pensar que son millones en el mundo de hoy y que el propio niño Jesús, según las Escrituras, nació en un pesebre para animales, porque no había lugar para María, cercana al parto, en ninguna posada en Belén. Él se mezcló con el destino de todos estos niños maltratados por nuestra falta de sensibilidad.

Más tarde, ese mismo Jesús ya adulto dijo: “quien recibe a estos hermanos míos más pequeños, a mí me recibe”. La Navidad tiene lugar cuando se da esta acogida, al pobre desamparado, ...

En medio de todas estas desgracias en el mundo, me viene a la mente una pieza de madera con una inscripción pirograbada que vi en una ocasión. En ella está escrito: “Cuando nace un niño es señal de que Dios todavía cree en el ser humano”.

¿Puede haber un acto de fe y esperanza mayor que este? En algunas culturas de África se dice que Dios está de manera especialmente presente en los que nosotros llamamos “locos”. Por eso son adoptados por todos y todos cuidan de ellos como si fueran un hermano o una hermana. Así se integran y viven en paz. Nuestra cultura los aísla y no los reconoce.

La Navidad de este año nos remite a esta humanidad ofendida y a todos los niños invisibles cuyos padecimientos son como los del niño Jesús, que ciertamente en el invierno de los campos de Belén temblaba en el pesebre. Según una antigua leyenda, se calentó con el aliento de dos caballos viejos que, en recompensa, adquirieron después completa vitalidad.

Vale la pena recordar el significado religioso de la Navidad: Dios no es un viejo barbudo con ojos penetrantes, ni un juez severo que juzga todas nuestras acciones. Es un niño. Y como niño no juzga a nadie. Sólo quiere vivir y ser querido. Del pesebre viene esta voz: “¡Oh, criatura humana, no temas a Dios! ¿No ves que su madre ha envuelto sus pequeños brazos? Él no amenaza a nadie. Más que ayuda, necesita ser ayudado y llevado en brazos”.

Nadie mejor que San Francisco de Asis entendió el significado humano y la verdad del niño Jesús: por eso hizo el primer nacimiento.

Gritemos con Fernando Pessoa: “Él es el Niño Eterno, el Dios que faltaba. Es tan humano que es natural. Es el Divino que sonríe y juega. Por eso sé con toda seguridad que él es el Niño Jesús verdadero. Es un niño tan humano que es divino. Nos llevamos tan bien los dos, en compañía de todo, que nunca pensamos el uno en el otro... Cuando me muera, Niño mío, déjame ser el niño, el más pequeño. Tómame en tus brazos y llévame a tu casa. Desnuda mi ser cansado y humano. Acuéstame en la cama. Cuéntame historias, si me despierto, para que me vuelva a dormir. Y dame tus sueños para que juegue, hasta que nazca cualquier día que tú sabes cuál es”.

¿Se puede contener la emoción ante tanta belleza? Por esto, todavía, a pesar de los pesares, podemos celebrar discretamente la Navidad.

Termino con este otro mensaje que tiene significado y que me encanta: “Todo niño quiere ser hombre. Todo hombre quiere ser rey. Todo rey quiere ser ‘dios’. Sólo Dios quiso ser niño”.

Abracémonos unos a otros como quien abraza al Divino Niño que se esconde en nosotros y que nunca nos abandonó. Y que la Navidad sea todavía una fiesta discretamente feliz.

Feliz Navidad.

“¿Qué dulzura queda en la vida, si le quitas la amistad? Robar la vida a la amistad es como robarle al mundo el sol. Un verdadero amigo es más digno de estima que un pariente”.

“What sweetness is left in life, if you take away friendship? Robbing life of friendship is like robbing the world of the sun. A true friend is more to be esteemed than kinsfolk.”

CICERO

# Christmas

By Tomás Núñez, ThD

Every time a child is born, it is a sign that God still believes in human beings.

It is Christmas time, but the aura is not Christmas but Good Friday. There are so many crises, terrorist attacks, and wars by bellicose and militaristic powers that destroy lives and cause horrific deaths of civilians and children; as the media frequently shows, we live in an atmosphere contaminated by resentment and a spirit of revenge in world politics, not to mention the astronomical levels of corruption: all this turns off the Christmas lights and darkens the pine trees that should create the atmosphere of joy and childlike innocence that still exists in every human person.

Anyone who sees the film Invisible Children, in seven different scenes, directed by renowned directors such as Spike Lee, Katia Lund, and John Woo, among others, can realize the destroyed lives of children in many parts of the world, condemned to live off the garbage and in the trash. Yet, there are touching scenes of camaraderie, small joys in sad eyes, and solidarity between them.

And to think that there are millions of them in the world today and that the baby Jesus himself, according to the Scriptures, was born in a manger for animals because there was no room for Mary, close to giving birth, in any inn in Bethlehem. He was mixed up with the fate of all these children mistreated by our lack of sensitivity.

Later, that same Jesus, already an adult, said: “Whoever welcomes these little brothers of mine welcomes me.” Christmas takes place when this welcome goes to the poor and helpless.

Amid all these misfortunes in the world, a piece of wood with a pyrographed inscription comes to mind that I once saw. It says: “When a child is born, it is a sign that God still believes in the human being.”

Can there be a more significant act of faith and hope than this? In some cultures in Africa, God is mainly present in those we call “mad.” That is why they are adopted and cared for by everyone as if they were a brother or sister. Thus, they integrate and live in peace. Our culture isolates them and does not recognize them.

This year's Christmas reminds us

of this offended humanity and of all the invisible children whose sufferings are like the baby Jesus, who certainly trembled in the manger in the winter of the fields of Bethlehem. According to an ancient legend, he was kept warm by the breath of two old horses who, in return, later acquired full vitality.

It is worth remembering the religious meaning of Christmas: God is not a bearded older man with piercing eyes nor a severe judge who judges all our actions. He is a child. As a child, He did not judge anyone. He only wants to live and be loved. From the manger comes this voice: “O human creature, do not fear God! Do you not see that his mother has wrapped his little arms around him? He does not threaten anyone. More than help, he needs to be helped and carried in arms.”

No one understood the human meaning and truth of the baby Jesus better than St. Francis of Assisi; that is why he made the first nativity scene.

Let us shout with Fernando Pessoa: “He is the Eternal Child, the God who was missing. He is so human that he is natural. He is the Divine One who smiles and plays. That is why I know that he is the true Baby Jesus. He is a child so human that he is divine. We get along so well in the company of everyone that we never think of each other. When I die, my Child, let me be the Child, the smallest. Take me in your arms and take me to your house. Undress my tired and human being. Lay me down in bed. Tell me stories if I wake up to go back to sleep. And give me your dreams so that I can play until I am born any day that you know which one it is.”

Can we contain our emotions in the face of so much beauty? That is why, despite everything, we can still celebrate Christmas discreetly. I end with this other message that has meaning and that I love: “Every Child wants to be a man. Every man wants to be a king. Every king wants to be a ‘god.’ Only God wanted to be a child.”

Let us embrace one another as one embraces the Divine Child who is hidden within us and who has never abandoned us. And may Christmas still be a quietly happy holiday.

Merry Christmas.



House of Mercy focuses on the physical, mental, and most importantly, spiritual rehabilitation of every person that comes seeking help in our organization. We are a place of rest for souls feeling lost and rejected today. Our mission is to reestablish and to raise lives according to the commands and principles of The Bible, and the example of our Lord Jesus Christ.

House of Mercy is in need of underwares for men and women. If you are interested in making a donation, Rumbo recommends ordering from Bags in Bulk.

Check out their webpage for selections where you can buy assorted sizes in bundles of 50 for a very low price.

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# Christmas Breakfast at The Center

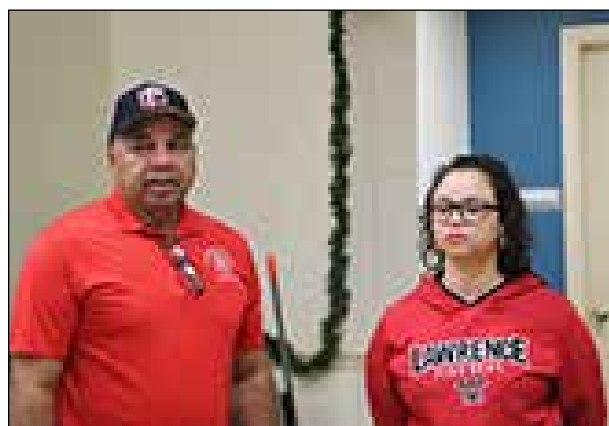
December 17, 2024

Photos courtesy of Richard Russell

For the past several years, the Lawrence Fire Department in partnership with The Center, have been celebrating this Christmas Breakfast.

Some firefighters did the cooking while others served the tables along with a few police officers and community volunteers had a wonderful time.

The Center is known for always being ready to contribute and be part of all that is good for Lawrence.







## Men's Basketball Downed in Battle With Saint Mary's



Moraga, Calif. - The Merrimack College men's basketball team lost by five points to Saint Mary's College on Thursday night in California. Five Warriors finished in double figures. Sean Trumper led the way for Merrimack with 13 points on the night.

### The Essentials

Score: Merrimack 68, Saint Mary's College 73

Records: Merrimack (5-8) | Saint Mary's College (10-2)

Location: UCU Pavilion

### Rapid Recap

- The Gaels opened the game scoring the first eight points. David Murray stopped the run with a layup. The Saint Mary's lead swelled to 11 points with 10 minutes to go in the first half. Trumper found the bottom of the net with a three to cut it to eight. Malik Edmead went a perfect four-for-four from the line to get the lead down to just six with seven minutes to go in the first. After a flurry that gave the Gaels an eight-point advantage, Matt Becht knocked down his first three of the night, cutting the lead to five. Saint Mary's added four-points to go up nine. Becht then nailed another three to make it a two-possession game. Both teams traded buckets. Edmead converted on a layup with 30 seconds left in the first half to get the lead to just four. A late bucket from the Gaels gave them a six-point lead heading into halftime.

- Adam "Budd" Clark knocked down his first shot of the second half to make it a four-point game early in the second half. Trumper then hit a three to make it a one-point game. After a Saint Mary's layup, Clark scored again, keep the game at one. The Gaels converted on a jumper putting them up three. Devon Savage hit a three to tie the game at 36. Saint Mary's

answered back with a jumper, putting them up two. Clark responded with one of his own, tying the game at 38. The Gaels hit a jumper giving them back the lead. Armandas Plintauskas drove the lane for two, tying the game at 40 with 13 minutes to play in the game. Saint Mary's scored four-straight to go up two possessions. Clark sliced in the lane for two, getting the lead down to two. Both teams battled back and forth. Saint Mary's found themselves up seven with eight and a half to play. Edmead hit a jumper getting it to five. With six minutes left in the game, Savage hit a three making it a two-possession game. After consecutive possessions with free throws, the Gaels were up eight. Savage hit another three cutting it to five. Tye Dorset found the bottom of the net with a three to make it a two-point game with three minutes to play. Saint Mary's answered with a three. Becht responded with a three of this own to keep the lead at two. The Gaels added four-points to go up six. Becht hit another three to get the lead down to three with a minute left. Two free throws down the stretch gave Saint Mary's the win by five.

### Notes and Numbers

- Clark finished the game with 12 points, eight assists, and four rebounds.
- Becht and Savage both had four threes in the loss.
- Edmead finished with a season-high 10 points in 15 minutes.

### Up Next

Merrimack gets back to action after the holiday break on January 3 when Fairfield comes to Lawler Arena. Game time is set for 3 p.m.

For continuing coverage of Merrimack College Athletics, visit [MerrimackAthletics.com](http://MerrimackAthletics.com) and follow the Warriors on Twitter and on Facebook.

## CLASIFICADOS | CLASSIFIEDS

### LEGAL NOTICE NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE

Notice is hereby given by Stuart's Automotive, Inc. 97 Tanner Street, Lowell, MA, pursuant to the provisions of Mass G.L c. 255, Section 39A, that they will sell or junk the following vehicle on or after January 8, 2025 starting at 10:00 am by private or public sale to satisfy their garage keepers lien for towing, storage, and notices of sale:

- 2017 Hyundai Tucson VIN KM8J3CA46HU561284

Vehicle is being stored at Stuart's Automotive and may be viewed by appointment only.

Signed  
Kevin Stuart  
Stuart's Automotive  
12/15, 12/22, 1/1

### LEGAL NOTICE NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE

Notice is hereby given by Coady's Towing Service 139 Marston Street, Lawrence, MA, pursuant to the provisions of Mass G.L c. 255, Section 39A, that they will sell or junk the following vehicles on or after January 16, 2025 starting at 10:00 am by private or public sale to satisfy their garage keepers lien for towing, storage, and notices of sale:

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- 2021 ZHWEKI ZW50QT VIN LT4Z1NAA4MZ000257
- 1985 Chevrolet G-Series Van VIN 2GBJG31M2F4154325
- 2020 Nissan Kicks VIN 3N1CP5CV8LL514766
- 2009 Ford F-150 VIN 1FTPX14V79FA47297
- 2003 Chevrolet Express VIN 1GAHG39UX31144961
- 2002 Dodge Grand Caravan VIN 2B4GP44312R784572

Vehicles are being stored at Coady's Towing Service and may be viewed by appointment only.

Signed  
Frank Coady  
Coady's Towing Service  
12/22, 1/1, 1/8

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# Three questions about Social Security that can help you plan your retirement

By Marilenin Vasquez  
MPAS

Social Security benefits are part of the retirement plan of many American workers. If you're among the many people paying Social Security taxes, you should get an estimate of what your future benefit may be. Our retirement webpage at [www.ssa.gov/retirement](http://www.ssa.gov/retirement) is a great place to start mapping out your retirement plan. These three questions will help to guide your planning:

- What factors may affect your retirement benefits?
- When is the right time to start receiving your retirement benefits?
- What documents do you need to provide when you apply for retirement?

We encourage you to use your personal my Social Security account at [www.ssa.gov/myaccount](http://www.ssa.gov/myaccount) to get an instant estimate of your future retirement benefits. You can also compare the effects of starting your retirement benefits at different ages.

We base your benefit on how much you earned during your working career. Higher lifetime earnings result in higher benefits. If there were some years you didn't work or had low earnings, your benefit amount may be lower than if you had worked steadily. If you never worked and did not pay Social Security taxes, and have a spouse who worked, you may be eligible for spouse's benefits. You must be at least 62 years old, and your spouse must already be receiving retirement or disability benefits. If you are a younger spouse, you may be eligible for benefits if you have a qualifying child in your care. By a qualifying child, we mean a child who is under age 16 or who receives Social Security disability benefits.

You can learn more at [www.ssa.gov/retirement](http://www.ssa.gov/retirement). Please share this information with family and friends to help them prepare for their financial future.

You can learn more at [www.ssa.gov/retirement](http://www.ssa.gov/retirement). Please share this information with family and friends to help them prepare for their financial future.

# Tres preguntas sobre el seguro social que pueden ayudarle a planificar su jubilación

Por Marilenin Vasquez  
MPAS

Los beneficios del Seguro Social son parte del plan de jubilación de muchos trabajadores estadounidenses. Si usted se encuentra entre las muchas personas que pagan impuestos del Seguro Social, debería obtener una estimación de cuál podría ser su beneficio futuro. Nuestra página web sobre jubilación en [www.ssa.gov/retirement](http://www.ssa.gov/retirement) es un excelente lugar para comenzar a trazar su plan de jubilación. Estas tres preguntas le ayudarán a orientar su planificación:

- ¿Qué factores pueden afectar sus beneficios de jubilación?
- ¿Cuándo es el momento adecuado para comenzar a recibir sus beneficios de jubilación?
- ¿Qué documentos necesita proporcionar cuando solicita la jubilación?

Le recomendamos que utilice su cuenta personal de my Social Security en [www.ssa.gov/myaccount](http://www.ssa.gov/myaccount) para obtener una estimación

instantánea de sus futuros beneficios de jubilación. También puede comparar los efectos de comenzar a recibir sus beneficios de jubilación a diferentes edades.

Basamos su beneficio en cuánto ganó durante su carrera laboral. Cuanto más altos sean los ingresos a lo largo de su vida, mayores serán los beneficios. Si hubo algunos años en los que no trabajó o tuvo ingresos bajos, el monto de su beneficio puede ser menor que si hubiera trabajado de manera constante. Si nunca trabajó y no pagó impuestos del Seguro Social, y tiene un cónyuge que trabajó, puede ser elegible para los beneficios para cónyuges. Debe tener al menos 62 años de edad y su cónyuge ya debe estar recibiendo beneficios de jubilación o discapacidad. Si es un cónyuge más joven, puede ser elegible para los beneficios si tiene un hijo calificado a su cuidado. Por hijo calificado, nos referimos a un hijo que es menor de 16 años o que recibe beneficios de discapacidad del Seguro Social.

Puede obtener más información en [www.ssa.gov/retirement](http://www.ssa.gov/retirement). Comparta esta información con familiares y amigos para ayudarlos a prepararse para su futuro financiero.



# Sports with Northern Essex Community College

By Dan Blair, Director of Athletics

## Men's basketball runs away in second half from Massasoit

Haverhill, MA (December 14, 2024) – The #15 nationally ranked Northern Essex Community College men's basketball team outscored Massasoit 51-26 in the second half of Saturday's contest to pull away for a 100-70 win, their 11th straight and improve to 13-2 on the season and 10-1 in conference play.

A pair of double-double performances from Alejandro Delgado (Haverhill) and Christian Sanders (Boston) led the way as scored 15 points and had a team high 17 rebounds, while Sanders added 17 points and 10 rebounds. Sanders shot three of six from three-point range.

Javien Kirmil (Lowell) finished with a team high 19 points on seven of 11

shooting including five of eight from beyond the three-point arc.

Alex Johnson (Worcester), Ryan Pacy (Salem, NH) and Xavier Rivera (Lowell) each all scored in double digits with 13, 12 and 12 respectively.

Kirmil and Yuno Matsuda (Tokyo, JP) both had a team high five assists.

As a team the Knights shot 47.7 percent from the field.

The Knights will wrap up the first half of the season on Wednesday when they play host Kingsborough Community College at 7:30pm on the Haverhill campus.

## Women's basketball drops conference matchup with Massasoit

Haverhill, MA (December 14, 2024) – The Northern Essex Community College women's basketball team dropped a region 21 contest over the weekend falling to Massasoit by a final score of 92-46. With the loss the Knights fall to 5-6 on the season and 4-3 in conference play.

The Warriors jumped out to a quick lead and never looked back as the Knights trailed throughout the contest. The Knights closed the gap in the opening minutes of the second half as they cut into the lead with a 25-point third quarter.

Mirelys Morales (Dracut) led the Knights in scoring with a team high 21 points and was followed by Rhaelyn Gutierrez (Methuen) who added 15 points.

Shaneley Henriquez (Haverhill) led the Knights with six rebounds to go along four assists and four steals.

The Knights close out the first half of the season on Wednesday when they play host to nationally ranked Kingsborough Community College at 5:30 on the Haverhill campus.

## Knights close out first half with 88-79 win over Kingsborough

Haverhill, MA (December 18, 2024) – The #12 nationally ranked Northern Essex Community College men's basketball team picked up their 12th straight win on the season to improve to 14-2 overall and in the process picked up their 41st straight win on Sport and Fitness Center floor to close out the season's first half with an 88-79 win over visiting Kingsborough Community College.

In a tightly contested game throughout, the Knights held a 43-36 lead at halftime, before outscoring the Wave by a 45-43 total in the second half.

Javien Kirmil (Lowell) scored a team

high 18 points and led five Knights in double figures, while also picking up four assists and two steals.

Alejandro Delgado (Haverhill) followed with 13 points and 11 rebounds for his eighth double-double of the season.

Cristian Moscat (Lawrence) tossed in 11 points, while Ryan Pacy (Salem, NH) and Christian Sanders (Boston) had 10 apiece.

The Knights will return to the court on Saturday January 11th when they travel to New York to take on LaGuardia Community College at 3:00pm.

[www.rumbonews.com](http://www.rumbonews.com)

## Fire victims / Víctimas de incendios

Please contact Heal Lawrence if you wish to make a contribution to the victims of the recent fires in Lawrence. The website has a list of donated items and things that are still needed.

Favor de ponerse en contacto con Heal Lawrence si desea hacer una contribución a las víctimas de los incendios recientes en Lawrence. El sitio en la internet tiene una lista de artículos que han sido donados y lo que todavía necesitan.

<http://heallawrence.org/> [heallawrence@aol.com](mailto:heallawrence@aol.com)

<https://www.facebook.com/heallawrence.mass>

## Message from Community Teamwork

People with disabilities are entitled to reasonable accommodations or modifications that allow them to fully enjoy their housing. Learn more and get help requesting accommodations or modifications from a housing provider by contacting the Community Teamwork Fair Housing program at 978-654-5637 or [fairhousing@commteam.org](mailto:fairhousing@commteam.org). Any opinions or recommendations expressed in this message are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

## Mensaje de Community Teamwork

Las personas con discapacidades tienen derecho a adaptaciones o modificaciones razonables que les permitan disfrutar plenamente de su vivienda. Obtenga más información y ayuda para solicitar adaptaciones o modificaciones a un proveedor de vivienda comunicándose con el programa de Vivienda Justa de Community Teamwork al 978-654-5637 o [fairhousing@commteam.org](mailto:fairhousing@commteam.org). Las opiniones o recomendaciones expresadas en este mensaje son las del autor y no necesariamente reflejan las opiniones del Departamento de Vivienda y Desarrollo Urbano.



BY DALIA DÍAZ  
daliadiaz@rumbonews.com

LÉALO EN ESPAÑOL EN LA PÁGINA 4

## From My Corner



### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR RUMBO

315 Mt. Vernon St.  
Lawrence MA 01843  
Email: [Rumbo@rumbonews.com](mailto:Rumbo@rumbonews.com)

Letters must be less than 300 words in length.  
Please send a telephone number or email  
address by which we may confirm the sender.

### Interruptions, disrespect, humiliation, and shame

Welcome to the City Council meetings! Just make sure your children are not watching because they will only learn to be nasty and offensive to people, particularly to city employees.

Of course, it's not all of them, but it becomes evident that some have not read anything about good manners, civility, decorum, or respect when dealing with others; we can watch any of the council or committees' meetings and will always find some reflection of the things I mentioned, but last week's meeting took the prize.

I don't know what the problem between Council President Jeovanny Rodriguez and District F Councilor Marc Laplante is, but you could cut the tension and antagonism with a knife. Jeovanny is quite insulting to Marc.

Even before they started interviewing three employees to be appointed permanently to their positions, there was an ugly fight between them over opinion vs. fact while discussing receiving reports from departments quarterly or annually. Jeovanny spoke at length on the subject, and Marc told him that was his opinion. If he had wanted to speak about his opinion, he should have given the given to Vice President Stephany Infante.

Jeovanny belittled Marc, yelling at him and threatening to cut off his microphone. It was a very embarrassing moment.

They started interviewing the three employees in an "acting" capacity. They had been grilled during the Personnel Committee meeting the previous week. It happens that the city hires or promotes people knowing they don't have the requirements for the job, hoping that after a few months of training, they get a good review and, thus, a permanent appointment.

The ordinance on file may say a bachelor's degree is necessary, but the job posting is usually tailored to the person they want to hire and show a high school diploma as its only requirement. They use the tactic of hiring them as "acting" when they come to pass the torture of the city council; they may just stick to the ordinance's requirements and not hire them.

None of the candidates had the required education or experience, yet they were appointed. Aida Santana, deputy director of DPW, did not have the education or five years of experience and will be earning between \$100K and \$145K plus the use of a take-home car. Stephany was the only one voting Present.

Awilda Pimentel, director of Community Development, did a very good presentation and had the blessings of the

councilors. She was treated with respect and courtesy by the councilors.

But, when it came to Rosanna Delrosario, deputy director of DPW, the tension was palpable. District B councilor Wendy Luzón couldn't pronounce her name correctly; she kept calling her Ms. "Rosario." Rosanna's command of the English language is excellent. Although she may not have a college degree, she is a certified and licensed dental assistant with a specific educational background.

Rosanna also has four years studying medicine in the Dominican Republic, and this January, she will begin university courses to obtain her bachelors degree.

Having been the Recycling Coordinator for almost three years, she acquired lots of training and brought many grants to the city for her department. The day after that fateful meeting, the city received this notification: *"The City of Lawrence has earned 11 points and will receive \$44,000. Your municipality has also been awarded \$250,000 in funding for a Waste Reduction Project for a Permanent Household Hazardous Waste Facility."* Rosanna applied for that grant six months ago.

Then District F councilor Marc Laplante explained why he was not going to give her his vote. There is an appearance of impropriety when married to District C Councilor Gregory Delrosario, as if she will give preferential treatment to residents in his districts. He added that her track record is foggy when she says she attends neighborhood meetings, and he claimed he saw her only once.

Council president Jeovanny Rodriguez picked up on that, stating that DPW shall show no preference in serving councilors. At this point, tears were noticeable in Rosanna's face.

Although Wendy Luzón asked to give this person an opportunity, the vote was Ana Levy, Wendy Luzón and Celina Reyes (YES); Marc Laplante and Jeovanny Rodriguez (NO); Fidelina Santiago (abstain); Stephany Infante and Vivian Marmol (present).

The feeling that it was all political was, obviously, a disgusting display of selfishness and even revenge.

No one will hear me criticizing a council vote, whether a YES or NO. We voted them in those positions to vote their conscience, whichever way it may be, but voting "abstain" or "present" should not be acceptable. If you are there, you must be willing to give your opinion. After all, the three asked Rosanna many questions that qualified them to have an opinion and vote accordingly.

## Dispose of live Christmas trees with these expert tips

Whether people with live Christmas trees intend to keep theirs up for a short or extended time this holiday season, the tree care experts at The Morton Arboretum recommend planning ahead for their proper disposal once they're taken down.

"Festive evergreen trees brighten homes during the holiday season, but they won't last forever," said the Arboretum's Plant Clinic Manager Spencer Campbell. "It's crucial to safely and appropriately discard a tree after its use to prevent a fire hazard."

The Arboretum's Plant Clinic provides free advice by email for those with questions about how to care for trees and plants, including Christmas trees. Campbell offers these recommendations for proper tree disposal:

1. **Prevent fires.** Dry trees can quickly become fire hazards. Discard a tree as soon as it shows signs of drying out. Dry needles will become brittle and start to fall off, and the tree will no longer absorb water. "Never burn an evergreen tree in a fireplace or woodstove, as it may cause buildup that could lead to a chimney fire," Campbell cautioned.
2. **Recycle.** Bare evergreen trees can be recycled at participating facilities. Check with local municipalities or waste management companies about tree recycling or disposal arrangements, including when and where trees will be picked up or whether they need to be brought to a recycling site. Recycled trees are chipped into mulch or compost. In some municipalities, people can pick up the fine-smelling mulch and spread it in their gardens.
3. **Clear the branches.** "Only the actual tree can be recycled," Campbell said. "Be sure to remove all decorations. If using a plastic tree bag to carry the tree from the house, take the bag off outside." Trees

that aren't bare will go to a landfill instead of being recycled. Flocked trees—those covered in white synthetic powder to suggest snow—can't be recycled. They must be thrown away in regular trash. Don't recycle live garlands, wreaths or anything containing wire, which could damage the shredding machinery. Discard those items in the trash.

4. **Consider your garden.** Branches cut from a tree can help protect plants in gardens. Branches laid over garden beds will insulate the soil so it doesn't heat up in winter warm spells and cause plants to emerge prematurely from dormancy. This is most useful in full-sun beds.

5. **Give wildlife a hand.** "If space permits—and neighbors don't mind—leave the tree in your backyard to provide shelter for birds and other animals during winter," Campbell said. Individuals can also place the trunk in a pond on their private property to provide shelter for fish.

The Morton Arboretum Plant Clinic is generously sponsored by Bartlett Tree Experts.

### About The Morton Arboretum

The Morton Arboretum is a globally recognized leader in tree research and education. Its 1,700 acre site cares for 106,714 specimens representing 4,067 different kinds of plants. The Arboretum's Center for Tree Science, Global Tree Conservation Program, Chicago Region Trees Initiative, and Center for Species Survival: Trees are contributing scientific knowledge and technical experience to secure the future of trees locally, nationally, and worldwide. Information about the Arboretum's scientific work and how it contributes to a greener, healthier world where people and trees thrive together can be found at [mortonarb.org](http://mortonarb.org).

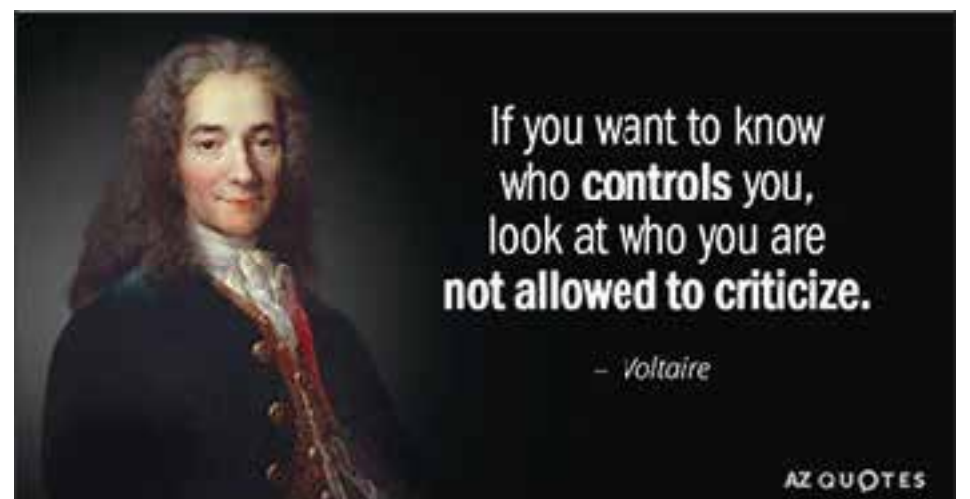
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— Helen Thomas

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- Thomas Jefferson



If you want to know  
who **controls** you,  
look at who you are  
not allowed to criticize.

- Voltaire

AZ QUOTES





**MASS RETIREES**  
The Online Voice of the Retired Public Employee

Dear Member,

Just moments ago, **repeal of the Social Security Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO) laws passed the US Senate by an overwhelming vote of 76 to 20.** HR82, the Social Security Fairness Act, is now on its way to President Biden for final approval and become federal law. **The president is expected to approve the measure.**

Tonight's historic vote marks the end of a 41-year battle to undue two unfair and unjust federal laws, which currently harm nearly 3 million public retirees. **Once implemented, the Social Security benefits of current retirees harmed by WEP/GPO will be restored to the correct amount going forward.** We will report details on when the adjustment may begin once information is available.

**We are beyond relieved that those members who have been financially harmed by WEP/GPO will finally receive long overdue relief.** The strength of our engaged and informed membership helped make this possible. **Thank you to all of have helped!**

On Thursday, I had the opportunity to speak with Massachusetts Junior US Senator Ed Markey about the gravity of this important moment. Please [view the attached video of our conversation](#). As a new member of the House in 1983, Markey was one of a handful of Democrats to vote against the Social Security Reform Act, which created WEP/GPO. **Senator Markey now has had the privilege of bookending his 1983 NO vote with tonight's YES vote to repeal WEP and GPO.**

**[Watch My Conversation with Senator Markey Here](#)**

Mass Retirees greatly appreciates the years of dedicated support from our entire Massachusetts Congressional delegation to end these two laws. Thank you for your support of public retirees and for never giving up on these issues.

While there are many people and organizations to thank for their support and help over the years, **we would like to single out a handful who have played an exceptional role in fighting to get to this special moment.** To start, thank you to the individual retirees who have personally engaged in the decades-long grassroots advocacy to end these laws. **We could not have achieved this victory without your help!**

Here in Massachusetts, virtually every retiree organization, public employee union, and the MA AFL-CIO pitched in to get this done. However, **we must say a special thanks to our friends from the PFFM and MassCop, who have lobbied on Capitol Hill side-by-side with Mass Retirees.** Last week, we visited the office of every Republican Senator on record supporting full repeal of WEP/GPO. **Those visits and conversations proved to make a key difference.**

At the national level, while many organizations have been directly involved in this fight, three stand out for helping to finally get HR82 passed by both branches of Congress. The IAFF, under the leadership of our good friend **General President Ed Kelly**, and the **Fraternal Order of Police** were key in prioritizing the issue and gaining true bipartisan support on Capitol Hill. The Facebook group **National WEP/GPO Repeal Coalition** has been critical in building a national grassroots movement of individual retirees to directly engage with members of Congress. Combined, these groups mobilized an army of national support.

Finally, throughout our decades of work to end WEP and GPO there have been two individuals working tirelessly alongside of Mass Retirees: **Tim Lee from the TRTA** and our Washington, DC consultant and Association member **Tom Lussier**. There were many years when it seemed that Texas and Massachusetts were the only states focused on ending WEP/GPO. **Tim and Tom stuck with us on these issues every step of the way.** From being lost in the endless hallways on Capitol Hill, to burning out more than one pair of shoes while dashing from one meeting to the next across Washington, we stuck with it for decades. **They are true friends and share in this extraordinary achievement.**

Collectively, we have all worked together to finally repeal these unfair laws on behalf of the 2.8 million current retirees. We are thrilled to finally deliver a victory, especially just days before Christmas and the Holidays. **Knowing that our Association and our allies have helped to better the lives of nearly 3 million retirees is a wonderful way to head into the holidays and end what has been a very good year.**

Happy Holidays to you and your family!

With great appreciation,

Shawn

Shawn Duhamel  
Chief Executive Officer  
Mass Retirees Association

PS: If you have received this email and are not a current member of Mass Retirees, **please consider joining the Association today.** We are able to advocate for all Massachusetts public retirees due to the strength of our well-informed and engaged membership. We also have growing **Associate Member program for active public employees.** This is an excellent way to stay informed and be better prepared for your future retirement, while helping to defend and improve your benefits.



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