

Murdock 2025 Graduation Ceremony Begins with a Procession and Ends with Showers (of Confetti)



from left, Karen Kast-McBride, Dr. Marc Gosselin, Charlotte King, Kelsey Garcia, Stephanie Rondeau (at lectern), David Fredette, Andrew Collins and Andrew Bloch congratulate graduate Emily Lopez as she receives her diploma.

Photo copyright Town of Winchendon

by Inanna Arthen

The Murdock Class of 2025 graduated in Murdock High School's 136th commencement ceremony on Sunday, June 1, at 2:00 p.m. School staff, family members, friends and well-wishers gathered in the Murdock High School gymnasium to listen and applaud as 52 graduates sang with the Murdock chorus and played with the band for the last time, gave their last speeches as Murdock students, and received

the diplomas they had worked so hard for through four years of post-COVID adjustment, changes in staff and changes in administration in the Winchendon Public Schools.

The Murdock Chorus began by singing "The Star Spangled Banner." Class President Emily Bradley then introduced the class Salutatorian, Avery Murphy, saying, "as the student with the second highest GPA in the class, Avery is a nationally recognized athlete competing in

track and field events and cross country. She will be continuing her academic and athletic career this fall, attending the University of Vermont to study exercise science and compete as a division one runner. Avery participated in our dual enrollment program as both a junior and a senior and will graduate with 33 college credits."

Ms. Murphy spoke about patience and growth. "If you know me, you know patience doesn't

come naturally," she said. "I'm often the first to panic when things don't fall into place right away. But over these past few years, I've learned more about how growth and progress don't always happen on a schedule. Many of us have something we're passionate about, something we drive to be better at... Oftentimes we find ourselves loving our passion but also

Turn to GRADUATION page 5



The Murdock High School Choir sings "For Good"
Image copyright Town of Winchendon



Murdock Class of 2025 Valedictorian Emily Bradley gives her last speech as a Murdock student
Image copyright Town of Winchendon

The Courier Needs You!

This special print edition of *The Winchendon Courier*, which includes the center "Community Connector" calendar section, is made possible by a grant to the town from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT). This same grant is also helping to launch Winchendon's new "microtransit system" and update the town website. But it won't keep the newspaper going forever.

For this printed paper to be sustainable in the long term, it needs support from the community and from you, its readers. The *Courier* needs business people and organizations who will advertise regularly, and sponsors who know that a local newspaper is one of the best things a community can have. Hundreds of Winchendon residents see every edition, both digital and online. If you'd like to find out more about sponsoring the *Courier* or becoming an advertiser, please contact the publisher at editor@winchendoncourier.net.

Winchendon News

Third Annual Founders Day Starts With Downpours, Ends Under the Stars

by Inanna Arthen

The 3rd Annual Founders Day celebration at the Winchendon Community Park at 86 Ingleside Drive took place on Saturday, June 7. Despite Mother Nature throwing some very wet kinks into the plans, participants had an enjoyable time, and the Atlas Fireworks show over Whitney Pond lit up the clearing skies at around 9:00 p.m.

The weather forecast over the previous week got gloomier by the day and some scheduled vendors and performers changed their plans. Early on Saturday morning, Winchendon Winds concert band, slated to be the first performers on the amphitheater stage at 12:00 noon, decided to play inside the Unitarian Universalist Church on Central Street, a very short distance from the Community Park. Announcements were made during their concert that the other Founders Day events at the Community Park were continuing “rain or shine.”

At almost 12:00 noon on the dot, downpours of rain began. One Winchendon Winds player who had just driven to Winchendon from New Hampshire showed a photo he’d taken of what looked very much like an embryonic funnel cloud spiraling downwards (not unusual for southwestern New Hampshire). In the park, Founders Day performer Jared Moore picked up the open time slot at the amphitheater and played on the stage for nearly three hours, according to a volunteer who spoke with the *Courier*.

Vendors, volunteers, food trucks and attendees determinedly waited the weather out, including C & C Treats and Bakery, Uncle Joey’s Cannoli, the Lickity Splitz ice cream truck, the Parks & Rec table selling swag, a raffle table, a table of children’s activities, a vinyl crafter, and several more.

By 5:00 p.m. the rain was easing up considerably. At 7:00 p.m., Briezy Jane and the Hurricane were performing on the stage, with a growing audience of listeners – some in the amphitheater tiers and some around the umbrella-sheltered tables at the top of the tiers – and the skies were clearing. Families were arriving steadily at the park, rapidly filling the parking area at the soccer field, carrying lawn chairs and gear, looking forward to food, fireworks and the day’s headliner musical performers, Anderson Daniels. The late afternoon had become very peaceful and lovely in the Community Park, if still very wet underfoot. A rivulet of water ran down the sidewalks, and tree frogs sang from every tree and bush.

At around 9:00 p.m., the fireworks show began, fired from a barge on Whitney Pond behind the amphitheater as Anderson Daniels played to the appreciative crowd – as crowd it now was!

The weather may have done its darnedest to dampen Founders Day,

but it couldn’t dampen Winchendon’s spirits, especially when fireworks and everyone’s favorite food, drink and music are on tap! Many thanks go to the organizers at Winchendon Parks & Recreation, the volunteers who worked hard (and got wet) before, during and after, the Winchendon DPW and Police Department for their support, the musicians, vendors, and fireworks technicians.

Shaina Cunningham, Parks & Recreation Coordinator, said, “Despite early rain showers, the skies eventually cleared, and the park quickly filled with residents and visitors eager to enjoy the festivities. A wide variety of artisan vendors lined the pathways, offering handcrafted goods and local treasures. Food trucks and community favorites served up delicious fare, including crowd-pleasers from the Kiwanis Club, Lickity Splitz, Heavy’s House, and Joey’s Cannolis.

“Live performances brought energy and excitement to the day. Local talent Jared Moore kicked things off, followed by the soulful sounds of Briezy Jane and the Hurricane. As the evening settled in, the crowd gathered at the amphitheater for a rousing performance by country headliner Anderson Daniels, whose set concluded just as a spectacular fireworks display lit up the sky.

“The event was made possible thanks to the dedicated efforts of the Winchendon Parks and Recreation Commission, a team of volunteers, and generous community support. Their hard work transformed the park into a lively hub of entertainment and connection.

“Thank you to everyone who helped make Founders Day 2025 a memorable success – we look forward to seeing you again next year under the stars.”

Founders Day 2025 was funded by the Robinson Broadhurst Foundation, the Winchendon Cultural Council and many generous sponsors and donors. Dani Cutler, chair of the Winchendon Cultural Council, said, “Even with the rain coming down at the start, Winchendon didn’t let that stop them from enjoying the Founders Day celebration. It was a last minute change, but people made it to the UU Church for Winchendon Winds, then the Community Park for more music, food, and fun. As the rain cleared, even more joined to celebrate our town’s history and culture. An event such as Founders Day is an event the Cultural Council is proud to support. We can’t wait for next year!”

A bit of history...

Founders Day started with the Grand Opening of the Winchendon Community Park and the Robinson Broadhurst Performing Arts Amphitheater on June 10, 2023. A vision of 10 years, the Community Park and amphitheater were special gifts to the town of Winchendon from the Robinson Broadhurst Foundation, especially former Foundation President Charles “Lad” McKenzie. Architectural schematics were presented in 2019, but it took four years and a pandemic to see the park and amphitheater finally completed. The day-long celebration bash included a ribbon cutting, speeches from town and Robinson Broadhurst dignitaries, and performances by the Murdock High School Choir, dance troops from The Dance Center, a youth theatre group performing an original play, and local bands including Faceless Hoboes, Kilroy, Darren Bessett and Whiskey Johnson. It was capped off with Winchendon’s first fireworks show since the town’s 250th anniversary in 2014.

The event was such a rousing success that it was promptly made a Winchendon town holiday, with plans to repeat it every year in the second weekend of June.

For a complete report on the 2023 event, see “Amphitheater Grand Opening a Grand Slam in Town History” in the June 15-22 2023 edition of the *Winchendon Courier*.



Attendees venture out into the open as the rain eases up
Photo by Dani Cutler



The stars of the night, Anderson Daniels
Photo courtesy of Shaina Cunningham



Winchendon Winds plays as the rain pours down outside
Photo by Dani Cutler

Winchendon News

Winchendon Receives T-Mobile Hometown Grant to Complete Final Phase of The HUB, a Youth-Led Community Center Powered by the Winchendon CAC

Winchendon, MA — The Winchendon Community Action Committee (CAC) is proud to announce that it has been awarded a \$50,000 T-Mobile Hometown Grant—one of only 25 communities selected nationwide in this round and the only recipient in Massachusetts.

This competitive grant will fund the final remodel phase of The HUB, Winchendon’s vibrant community center operated by the CAC. Housed in a repurposed former bowling alley, The HUB is home to the local food pantry, a youth workforce development program, the Sunshine Café, the Local Makers Hub, a social service center, and, of course, open bowling. The HUB serves as a central gathering place for all ages and a powerful symbol of community-led revitalization.

The awarded funding will support:

- A new ADA-accessible indoor/outdoor classroom, expanding access to educational workshops, community events, and youth programming year-round.
- A youth-designed public mural initiative, celebrating Winchendon’s identity and creative spirit through bold, inclusive artwork.

Community members are invited to celebrate this exciting milestone at a check presentation ceremony during Winchendon’s Annual Food Truck Festival on Saturday, June 28 at 12:30 p.m. at G.A.R Park (52 Murdock Ave). The event will include remarks from town leaders, youth representatives, and project partners, along with a preview of the project vision.

“We’re honored that Winchendon has been selected as a T-Mobile Hometown Grant recipient,” said Andrew Beauvais, Chair of the Winchendon Board of Selectmen. “This investment in The HUB strengthens

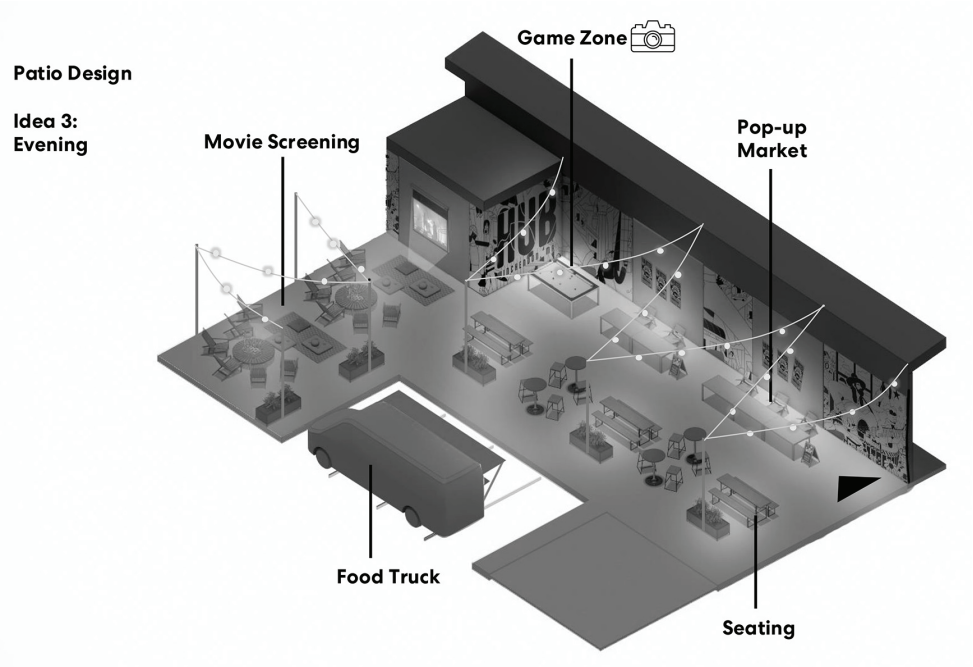
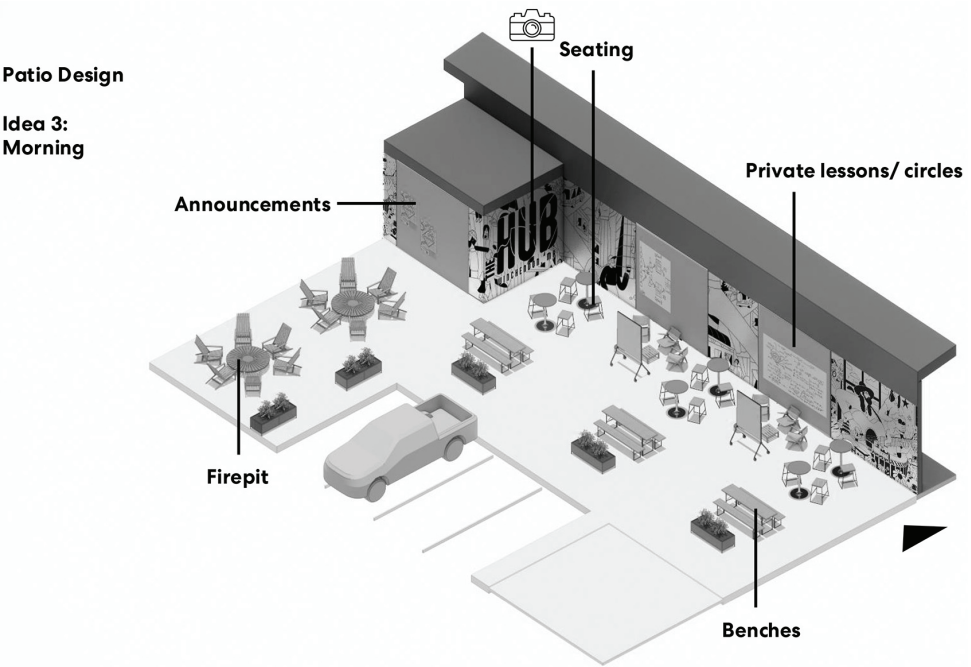
our commitment to youth empowerment, economic development, and community wellness. The new ADA-accessible classroom and community murals will expand access and celebrate the creative spirit of our town. It’s a proud day for Toy Town and a meaningful step toward a brighter future for all who call it home.”

Town Manager Bill McKinney added: “The Town of Winchendon is honored and excited that one of our local non-profits has received a T-Mobile grant. This project will provide a flexible, accessible venue for educational workshops, social services, and community events—and contribute to creative placemaking that sets the tone for future public art and infrastructure projects.”

“T-Mobile’s grant is helping us make The HUB a place that truly brings people together,” said Nikolaus Brauer-Chagnon, Youth Changemaker Director and high school student. “We’ll have more space to host events, connect with the community, and celebrate our town. The mural will help us show off our pride in Winchendon. Thank you, T-Mobile, for helping us make the world a better place—one step at a time.”

Since its launch in 2021, the T-Mobile Hometown Grants program has committed \$25 million over five years to support small-town revitalization projects across the country. The program is administered in partnership with Main Street America and Smart Growth America, and it prioritizes projects that demonstrate strong local leadership and long-term community impact.

For more information about the T-Mobile Hometown Grants program, visit: www.t-mobile.com/hometowngrant



Day and evening concept renderings. The designs were created by Perkins and Will architectural and design firm as part of their social purpose initiative. The CAC was selected as their social purpose project and received the designs for the interior and exterior space, along with murals, branding and logo design for the HUB free of charge.

Images courtesy of the Winchendon CAC



The space as it exists now. This is on the side of the building facing Whitney Pond.
Photos courtesy of the Winchendon CAC

Winchendon News

Town-Wide Participation for Town-Wide Cleanup



Health Agent Jim Abare (L) and BOH Member Lionel Cloutier greet volunteers at check-in station
Image courtesy of Jill Nicholson Sackett

by Jill Nicholson Sackett

Sidewalks, roadsides and parking lots were punctuated with busy volunteers as Winchendon held its town-wide trash cleanup on Saturday, May 17. The annual event was sponsored and run by Winchendon’s Board of Health (BOH). BOH Chair Tina Santos, members Lionel Cloutier, Monique Connor, Yvonne Senecal, Health Agent Jim Abare, and previous BOH Vice-Chair Glenn LaRoche and wife Sharon Larochelle all staffed the event.

Participants reported to “base operations” at Town Hall’s Pleasant Street entrance, where they signed in and indicated the area(s) they planned to clean. BOH staff offered everyone gloves, heavy-duty garbage bags, trash “picker” tools, orange vests and hearty thanks.

The yields were great. By the end of the four-hour event an entire walk-in dumpster was full to the brim with all manner of refuse. Aside from the “usual” tires, fast food packaging, mattresses and countless nips, volunteers hauled in a double baby carriage, half a kitchen sink, a car seat, a shopping cart, and an old gun cabinet. Some areas, such as the intersection by CVS, had a proliferation of cigarette butts which were unfortunately too small and numerous to collect.

In past years, Winchendon’s town-wide cleanup has been scheduled in April, close to Earth Day. BOH selected a later date this year, hoping that



Democratic Town Committee Members Bill O'Neill, Joe & Jill Sackett and Mike D'Intinosanto were among the many groups participating
Image courtesy of Jill Nicholson Sackett

warmer and perhaps drier weather would encourage a better turnout. That planning paid off. The morning was temperate and cloudy, and rain held off until just near the end of the collection time. BOH Chair Santos proudly announced that this year’s cleanup was a great turnout, noting “We had much more people help, some new faves along with dedicated ones who help every year. The LaRochelles haven’t missed a cleanup in years; they help with donating their two trucks along with my truck. We go around town picking up large items such as furniture and tires. I truly appreciate everyone’s participation.”

Approximately 40 signed up to help. These included individual residents and various groups and organizations including churches, the Monomac Springs Lake Association and the Democratic Town Committee.

Now diligence by all of us begins. If you think tossing one piece of trash out of your car window won’t amount to much or be noticed, rest assured it all adds up and it doesn’t “break down.” The Winchendon Transfer Station accepts many bulky items. Residents do not need an annual sticker to visit. Car tires cost \$11 and mattresses cost \$25-60 for non-sticker holders, with lower fees for sticker holders. For more information about the Winchendon Transfer Station, hours and fees, visit: <https://www.townofwinchendon.com/transfer-station> and click on the “FY25 Recycle Guide and Price List.”



A rusty truck door was one of the more unusual items retrieved from the roadside
Image courtesy of Jill Nicholson Sackett



Town-wide cleanup dumpster at the three-quarters point
Image courtesy of Jill Nicholson Sackett

ST. MARTIN’S CHURCH

FESTIVAL

AND

CHICKEN BBQ

Saturday, July 19 • 10 am-2 pm

Otter River Sportsman’s Club

To reserve dinner tickets (\$12) call 978-939-5588.

Theme baskets, 50/50, raffles, free activities for kids, and more! Hot dogs and snacks available all day.

Free Yoga Classes at the Beals Memorial Library

With all the reading you’re going to be doing this summer, you’ll want to get up and do some stretching!

Unwind, relax, and celebrate the beauty of yoga with instructor Chantal Froystein, from Shadow Alchemy Wellness. Starting on June 17, this class will run on Tuesday mornings at 10:30 a.m. All skill levels are welcomed! Mats and blocks are available, if needed. These classes are FREE and are open for adults and teens. Donations are gratefully accepted, but not required.

The Beals Memorial Library is located at 50 Pleasant Street in Winchendon. For more information, contact the library at 978-297-0300 or visit their website at bealslibrary.org.

Winchendon News

GRADUATION

continued from page 1

feeling like it may be holding us in one place. We compare ourselves to others, thinking we need to be ahead of where they are, or moving faster than we are.” She went on to say that she’d expected to grow in the same direction as in the past, “but life had different plans.” She went on, “Growth isn’t comfort. It’s doubt and it’s persistence. It’s how you decide to continue on. It’s dedication and hard work. It’s showing up when things get hard, when life feels heavy. It’s the quiet work and the resilience to keep moving forward.” Success isn’t always winning, she said; sometimes it’s just as important to “find your peace.”

Murdock High School Principal David Fredette spoke next. “So we’ve come together today to celebrate a milestone. Graduation is a turning point. It marks the end of a chapter that at times felt like it would just never end, especially during midterms, MCAS testing, or those mysterious fire drills that just happened to fall during your least favorite class,” he said. Students were leaving high school to enter a faster, shinier world. But it’s human traits that will matter most, he said. Accountability is the first—“owning your choices, not shifting the blame, not making excuses.” Next is humility. “Humility is what keeps you learning. It’s what helps you grow from mistakes, accept feedback and admit when you don’t know something, you don’t need all the answers. You just need the willingness to ask better questions.” Grit is important, keeping on when motivation isn’t enough. “It’s choosing effort over comfort. You all have it. You’ve shown it just by being here today, sitting in those chairs, wearing those gowns and everything it took to get to this moment,” he said. Finally, “just be a good person...what this world will always need is people who are kind, people who notice when someone’s struggling, who put down their phones at dinner, who say, thank you, I’m sorry, without a prompt. You don’t have to change the world in a day, but you can change the moment you’re in by how you treat the people around you.”

The Murdock High School Chorus rose to sing “For Good,” from the musical *Wicked*.

Winchendon Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Marc Gosselin came to the lectern next. He began, “As our singers just said, because we knew you, Class of 2025, Murdock is forever a better place.

You left this place far better than you found it.” He spoke of eating lunch with the seniors and hearing “lots of ideas” but a big one was “reignite school spirit.” He went on, “This class was one of the first classes to come back to full time school after COVID. So they inherited lots of systems that needed a reboot and recharge, and so the class officers and all the students in the class did a great job of modeling for their peers what it means to show up, get involved. They won the class cup, and they also, day in and day out, modeled what it meant to be kind, mature and responsible students.” He told a story about working with some Amish when he was at Pennsylvania State University and asking them how they managed to plow their field in such perfectly straight rows. His Amish friend explained that they used trees on the horizon as guides.

“I thought about that lesson and what it meant about finding your tree to guide your way... whenever you’re faced with uncertainty, always seek to find your tree. It’ll always be that thing that centers you and guides you along your journeys,” he said.

“You grew up in a small town, you attended a small school, and some might say that that limits you, but I reject that,” Dr. Gosselin said. “I say that instead, it actually prepares you in a small town. You’re not anonymous. People know your name. Sometimes they know your dog’s name, maybe even what you have for breakfast. And while that might feel overwhelming at times, it also means that you’ve been seen, supported, encouraged, every step of the way in a small school. You don’t just learn in classrooms, but you also lead clubs, captain teams, perform on stage and serve in your community, and many of the students in this class have done all of those things...That just speaks to the type of kids that we have in our community. They grew up multitasking, collaborating and learning to make a difference. And that’s not a limitation. That’s a gift. You become the kind of people who show up for each other, for your town and now for the world.”

The next speaker was Chair of the Winchendon School Committee, Karen Kast-McBride. “I’m sensing a theme to these speeches,” she began. “You’ve already shown us that you are exactly what the world needs. You made it here today with hard work, dedication, empathy, caring, humor...all while persevering through major challenges that

many of us, sitting up here, sitting out there, could have never imagined when we were graduating high school, including, as has been mentioned, living through a pandemic while trying to keep up with your education. I know how hard that was on all of you, but you handled it.” She urged the students to always be a part of their community in some way, because the world needs them, and to remember that learning is a life-long journey no matter what they do in life. “Keep an open mind. Keep exploring, questioning and growing. It is only when you stop learning that you truly become old and really, who wants to do that? Definitely not you guys,” she said.

Responsibility, teamwork, accountability, integrity, acceptance and empathy—“With these skills, you will be able to go anywhere, handle anything, and work with people from all walks of life, so please keep honing those skills,” Ms. Kast-McBride went on. “Everything in every single one of you epitomizes the saying, ‘shine so bright that it burns their eyes.’ Please, never stop shining...The future belongs to those who dare to believe in the beauty of their dreams.”

Andrew Collins, the advisor to the Class of 2025, came to the lectern next. He began by saying that of the 52 graduates, all but eight had been one of his students, “many of them taking every class I offer. I shared with them the credo that I’ve secretly tried to impart to them their entire time here. Be happy, stay well, do good, leave a legacy.” Murdock was “kicking them out of the nest” and it was time for them to “do your part to make the world a better place.” He then read a piece he had written for the Class of 2025 titled, “They Were Here.”

Class Treasurer Emma Blake and Class Historian Cohen Veilleux then came forward to honor members of the high school staff with “superlatives” and give gift bags to staff members who they judged had gone above and beyond in supporting the seniors and serving as models for the students.

Finally, Emily Bradley, Valedictorian of the Class of 2025, rose to give her speech. Mr. Collins introduced her, saying, “Emily was recognized as our class Valedictorian with the highest GPA in the class. Emily has served as a class president all four years, the Vice President of the National Honor Society this year, and was a member and captain of

the nationally recognized Murdock cheer team. Emily participated in our dual enrollment program, both as a junior and a senior, and will be graduating with 33 college credits. She’ll be continuing her academic and athletic career this fall, attending Florida Atlantic University to study criminal justice.”

Ms. Bradley thanked her coaches, her teachers, her friends and her family—especially her mom, who kept on pushing and pushing her, already an honor roll student athlete, to aim for Valedictorian. “Her constant encouragement opened my eyes to my own potential. So thanks to her persistent nagging,” Ms. Bradley said. She went on, “To quote Zach Ryan, ask yourself, how lucky are we? How lucky are we to have stuck together and overcome countless pivotal moments, from sharing our adolescence to stepping into this next chapter of our lives. We have grown side by side. I cannot wait to see each of us branch out into our own unique and admirable futures. For the past four years, we have walked into this castle-like school at 7:30 a.m., Dunkin in hand every morning, we learned, laughed and sometimes cried. Over these years, we’ve built unbreakable connections with both students and staff, learning lessons that will stay with us for the rest of our lives.” She urged her classmates, “don’t become strangers to one another. We have shared years together.” Share the weddings and baby showers, get together for a night out. “I have come to deeply value community, my sports communities, my work community and my town community. Community makes humanity beautiful. The ability to connect with others is a gift that many of us don’t cherish or use enough. So don’t burn bridges. Check up on old friends,” she said.

With all the inspirational “speechifyin’” concluded, the graduates were called onstage individually by Student Activities Advisor Stephanie Rondeau, given their diplomas by Murdock High School Vice Principal Andrew Bloch and Mr. Collins, and congratulated with handshakes by Director of Pupil Services Kelsey Garcia, Assistant Superintendent Charlotte King, Dr. Gosselin and Ms. Kast-McBride.

As Ms. Bradley led her classmates in turning their mortarboard tassels from the right side to the left, a few of the graduates leaped up with confetti cannons they’d smuggled in under their gowns to fire volleys of confetti high into the air.

The Murdock High School Class of 2025

Cody Beauvais Michaud
Joel Berrospe
Kaylynn Bigness
Kyle Bisson
Emma Blake
Gavin Boucher
Emily Bradley
Tanner Brimhall
Ryan Chicoine

Layla Collins
Lillyanna Cyganiewicz
Madilyn Daniels
Janelle Dansin
Matthew Dellmuth
Benjamin Digman
Brayden Donahue
Wyatt Fitzgerald
Lana Girouard

Avery Gomez
Ian Hart
Sophia Jean
Kenndra Lamb
Rachel LeBlanc
Jayden Lindsay
Emily Lopez
Annalise Lor
Brendon MacKay

Jeremy Mackie
Livia Eduarda Martins
Erin McCarthy
Kalib McKenney
Elizabeth Merrill
Avery Murphy
Yasmin Nascimento
Milo-Vaughn Nicholson
Noah Oliveira

Quinne Richard
Daniel Rosario
Madelyn Santos
Madison Scortico
Surianna Silavong
Addison Silver
Jackson Skawinski
Megan St. Pierre
Owen Trickett

Ryan Valliere
Vincent Vecchiarello
Cohen Veilleux
Bradley Wightman
Andy Yang

Community Connector Brings Public Transit to Winchendon in Official June 1 Launch

by Inanna Arthen

For some months now, Winchendon residents have been hearing about “The Community Connector” — an expansion of the rides service that the Senior Center has been offering to seniors for years. No longer just for seniors — although seniors and folks with disabilities have first priority — rides are now available to anyone who needs them. Vans bring groups of people to Our Neighbor’s Kitchen suppers at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Winchendon, Winchendon Winds band concerts, and other events around town. Then there’s this thing called a “Toy Town Trolley” that runs regular routes, round and round, around Winchendon, up to the shopping centers in Rindge and back, on Saturdays. What’s this all about? Is Winchendon getting its own small version of the T?

Sort of! At least that’s the ultimate vision. It’s called “microtransit” and it’s getting to be quite a thing in small towns like Winchendon. The state legislature is supporting it with funding in the state budget. The *Courier* sat down with Winchendon Transportation Coordinator Katie Johnson to find out how Winchendon and microtransit are working together.

“The Community Connector is a microtransit system, and basically that means that traditional fixed bus routes don’t work in this area because it’s a rural area,” Ms. Johnson said. “It’s a very large area in Winchendon, and traditional bus routes don’t tend to meet the needs of most of the residents who don’t have cars. So instead of doing fixed bus routes, we’re doing curb to curb service. We pick people up at home and we bring them to their destination, or we bring them to other transportation hubs, like a bus stop or a rail station. It’s a microtransit system started by and for Winchendon residents. We just launched it, and we have an app for folks to request rides, or they can call and request rides, and we can do recurring rides for folks.”

The project became possible last year thanks to a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT). “Our initial grant was \$500,000, so quite a lot,” Ms. Johnson said. “We got that in April 2024, and we’ve been using that do some research planning. We have a Transportation Task Force made up of community members that’s helping us along the way. We’ve hired quite a few drivers and we’re paying their salaries through this grant. That initial grant is ending June 30, so this month, we’ve embedded the transportation into the town budget a little bit. We already had two full time drivers at the Senior Center and a dispatcher. So that’s part of the Senior Center budget that passed at Town Meeting. We also have 10 hours for the Transportation Coordinator, and we have added one full time driver to the town budget starting next fiscal year, July 1.” Ms. Johnson continued, “We have another \$50,000 from MassDOT, which is extremely reduced from the initial amount we got, but that does cover about one driver’s full time salary for the year.”

Rides have been free for the last six months, but with the grant funding dropping way down, the Community Connector will start charging fares as of July 1. Riders will pay in advance when they schedule their ride, so the drivers won’t be handling payments or cash. Riders can pay in person at the Senior Center, use a credit card over the phone, or pay through the Community Connector app, which is already live and available in both the Google Play and Apple app stores. The app is a feature provided by the system’s new scheduling software package, Via.

Fares will be half-price for seniors, people with disabilities, veterans, active military personnel, youth under 18, and CAC members who are low-income. The regular fares will be \$2 each way within Winchendon, \$4

each way outside of Winchendon within 10 miles, \$6 each way between 10 and 20 miles outside of Winchendon, and \$8 each way for destinations 20-30 miles from Winchendon. Rides of more than 30 miles, such as to Worcester, will be \$10 each way.

The Community Connector doesn’t do airport runs, Ms. Johnson explained, because it’s just too far. Community Connector team members can sit down with people one-on-one and help them coordinate their transportation using a combination



Some of the vehicles used by Winchendon’s new Community Connector microtransit service
Photo by Inanna Arthen

of services. People often request rides to medical appointments in Boston, which is also beyond the Community Connector’s range. The Community Connector can, however, take riders to the Fitchburg MART station where they can catch the MART bus to Boston. The MART bus will drop riders off very early in the morning and pick them up when their appointments are done.

The Community Connector coordinates closely with the MART bus system. “We have two MART routes,” Ms. Johnson said. “There’s the Winchendon link, which we’ve had for many, many years, that goes to Heywood and Lake Dennison and Mount Wachusett. And we just recently, this year, got a route that goes through Ashburnham and Winchendon, and it brings folks to Price Chopper and Heywood.” Riders are encouraged to use the MART bus when the routes work for them. The Community Connector has a contract with MART and utilizes two MART vehicles. Winchendon is reimbursed by the mile, for gas, and for driver hours. MART also trains the Community Connector drivers.

Maintaining a fleet of vehicles is expensive, Ms. Johnson affirmed. Grant funding covers a large part of the costs. MART maintains its vehicles, and the CAC van is a town vehicle so the Winchendon DPW takes care of its maintenance.

A microtransit system has advantages for car owners as well as those who don’t have their own vehicles. Ms. Johnson said, “A big advantage is, if your car breaks down, we’ve got you for rides. There’s a safety net. And especially the more people using a service like this, we do ride shares. You might not be the only person going to your appointment, say, in Athol. You might have a couple people on the bus with you. That reduces emissions and it reduces the amount of cars on the road. So it makes traffic better for everyone, including people who own cars. It’s reducing emissions, which is helpful for the environment. So there are pros to using it as a car owner.”

Although the system has been running in “beta mode” for some months, Ms. Johnson explained, “We waited to launch to the public until we had a more robust software. The software we were using before this was not ideal for running the amount of vans we were doing. It was designed for senior centers, not a full microtransit system. So we wanted to get that software. We wanted to get used to that before we launched. And we’ve also been ramping up rides as we have the grant money. Last month, we did over 800 rides.”

Rider fares will never be enough to cover most of the costs, unless they were prohibitively expensive. Fares might cover the salary of one part-time driver if the system is getting a healthy level of use by residents.

In addition to the on-demand rides, “The Toy Town Trolley is a fixed route that we’re running as a town,” Ms. Johnson said. “It stops at all the apartment complexes in Winchendon. We also go along stops on Central Street, and we bring folks up to Rindge so people can access the grocery stores. It’s a much shorter ride than the MART route for Price Chopper. It’s also a Saturday option, because MART only runs Monday through Friday in Winchendon. So it’s a Saturday option for folks if they want to get their grocery shopping done Saturday, if they want to go to Walmart or Tractor Supply, or even if you live in Goodrich or Hyde Park, and you want to check out something on Central Street, you want to go to the coffee shop, or if you want to go to CVS or something like that.”

The Transportation task force is working on marketing and messaging now, getting the word out to residents that this service is available. There will be an official ribbon cutting for the Community Connector at the start of the Food Truck Festival in G.A.R. Park (Grove Street and Murdock Avenue) on Saturday, June 28, at 12:30 p.m. State Representative Jon Zlotnik and town officials are expected to attend.

To download the free app, go to the Google Play or Apple app stores and search for “Community Connector Transit” app. It will come up saying “Via Transportation Inc” and will have the Community Connector icon, as seen to the right.



Edward Jones

> [edwardjones.com](https://www.edwardjones.com) | MemberSIPC

Think CDs are boring? That's the point.

Bank-issued,
FDIC-insured
6-months APY*

4.300%

CDs may seem uninteresting, but that's their superpower. As an investment vehicle, they offer competitive rates while generally being predictable and dependable. Call us to learn more about our boring CDs with not-so-boring rates.

*Annual Percentage Yield (APY) effective 06/20/25. CDs offered by Edward Jones are bank-issued and FDIC-insured up to \$250,000 (principal and interest accrued but not yet paid) per depositor, per insured depository institution, for each account ownership category. Please visit www.fdic.gov or contact your financial advisor for additional information. Subject to availability and price change. CD values are subject to interest rate risk such that when interest rates rise, the prices of CDs can decrease. If CDs are sold prior to maturity, the investor can lose principal value. FDIC insurance does not cover losses in market value. Early withdrawal may not be permitted. Yields quoted are net of all commissions. CDs require the distribution of interest and do not allow interest to compound. CDs offered through Edward Jones are issued by banks and thrifts nationwide. All CDs sold by Edward Jones are registered with the Depository Trust Corp. (DTC).

Please contact us if you have \$1,000 or more to invest.



Jordyn Lynds
Financial Advisor
113 Central St
Winchendon, MA 01475
978-297-7452

FDI-19160-A AECSPAD 25578408



Community Connector

Welcome to The Community Connector! In this pull-out section of the printed *Winchendon Courier*, you'll find a complete calendar of local events, a page of events and activities by category, and where to find more details about the organizations and groups that help make Winchendon a great place to live. The Community Connector is funded by a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT).

Woo Trucks and Winchendon Parks & Rec Are Doing It Again! Sat June 28—2025 Food Truck Festival and Battle of the Bands at Same Place, Different Time

by Inanna Arthen

The 2025 Food Truck Festival and Battle of the Bands, one of the most successful annual events at the G.A.R. Park next to the Old Murdock Senior Center, will rock out on Saturday, June 28—but at a different time this year. The festivities will begin at 12:00 noon and conclude at 7:00 p.m., and are absolutely free for all ages. Bring a lawn chair or blankets if you will be listening to the bands, as seating in the park is very limited.

As a special feature of this year's Food Truck Festival Event, the Winchendon Community Connector will hold an official ribbon cutting for the town's new "microtransit" public transportation program, at 12:30 p.m. at the beginning of the festival. Representative Jon Zlotnik and other town and state officials are expected to attend. There will also be an official check presentation to the Winchendon CAC for the grant they just received from T-Mobile to complete work at the Winchendon Community HUB.

The Food Truck Festival is sponsored by Winchendon Parks & Recreation, who say, "Join us for a day packed with delicious eats, live music, and fun for all ages! Enjoy tasty food from top food trucks, craft beer and wine, exciting games, and high-energy performances from local bands competing for the crown. You won't want to miss it!" Attendees will vote for their favorite band out of five contenders.

Anyone interested in a vendor table or volunteering for the event can get more information at www.eventeny.com/events/foodtruckfestivalandbattleofthebands-17886.

Robert Ziedelis, events manager for Woo Trucks, says, "The Winchendon Food Truck Festival is an annual community oriented, summer kick-off celebration. Easily accessible just off Rt. 12 or Rt. 202, this festival includes a multitude of your favorite food trucks, live musical performances from live bands in a 'Battle of the Bands' format, a Beer Garden pouring local craft favorites, as well as dozens of area artists and makers tables displaying their wares in a beautifully scenic, historic park setting. Bring along a folding chair or lay out a picnic blanket and enjoy the afternoon's festivities.

"WooTrucks is a food truck commissary, commercial kitchen, and base of operations for food trucks, caterers, bakers, and food entrepreneurs located at 67 Main Street, Boylston MA. Our fully permitted and approved facility to prepare food was established to foster a transparent, self-policing community of food trucks and food entrepreneurs practicing only the highest standards of customer service while maintaining strict adherence to health, sanitation and food codes. WooTrucks operates food truck festivals throughout the region and supplies food trucks to corporate clients, private businesses, breweries, academic institutions, city and town governments."

G.A.R. ("Grand Army of the Republic") Park is located at Grove Street and Murdock Avenue, next to the Old Murdock Senior Center. On GPS, search for the intersection of Grove Street and Murdock Avenue, or "Monument Park", Winchendon, MA, to make sure it finds the right park. Parking is available on the streets around the area, but walking or car-pooling to the park is suggested. Past Food Truck Festivals have attracted over 1,000 attendees.

Scheduled to appear:

Food Trucks	Wine and Beer		
Berrysweets	Decanted Wine Truck & Mobile Bar	Magically Scented	Arvo James MacLure Memorial Foundation Inc
Birds Nest Italian Street Food	Four Phantoms Brewing Company	Mama Fix It	CRoux Paints
Bono Appetit	Moon Hill Brewing & Gardner Ale House	Ooh Sparkly Glitter Tattoos & Face Painting	PaperPie
Breez Freez		Princess Beach Gems	Queenie Care LLC
Dogfather	Artisans/Crafters	Rambling Rose	RebelYell Refreshments LLC
Easy Street Tacos	A Crafting We Shall Go	RPW Rustic Creations	
Eggroll Cafe	Blissful Boutique	The Native Kitchen	THE BANDS
Mac Daddy	Burning Succulents	The Tanzanite Otter	The Faceless Hobos
Moe's Sweet Eats	Color Street	TsbySheila	Sheep Dip
Nom Nom Hut	Country Gals Homestead	Wicked Cool Projects	Rock 201
Potato Potato	DIY Drinkware	Vendors/Organizations	Plead the 5th
Sauce and Tossed Chicken Co	Ema Luvs and Co	Infinite Creations	Down Daizy
Sugarcane Hut	Golden Crochet Co	Path Vacations	
The Taco Dude	Grateful Henna	Renewal by Anderson	
Travelin' Bones BBQ	Kinda Sassy Creations	Slime Time Studio	
Uncle Joey's Cannoli	LoSa Candles	Department of Children and Families (DCF)	



July Sunset Social: "Neon Party"

On Saturday, July 12 from 6:00 to 10:00 p.m., Light Up the Night! Get ready for an unforgettable glow-up! Join Sunset Socials for a vibrant night of music, lights, and nonstop fun! Wear your brightest neon - Dance under UV lights - Enjoy live DJ sets spinning the hottest tracks - Capture glowing memories with friends. Whether you're coming to party or just enjoy the vibes, this night is all about electric energy and luminous celebration.

To Register & For More Information see www.sunsetsocialsma.com/event/neon-party-social-2/register. Sponsored by Winchendon Community Park and Winchendon Parks & Recreation. Questions? contact info@farmingislife.org or richypena@yahoo.com. At Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Dr.



July

TUESDAY JULY 1

Sippin' Seniors

6:30-9:30 a.m. Drop by Sippin' Serendipity Cafe at 206 Main street and grab some locally roasted coffee and pastries while socializing with other Seniors! The Senior Center will provide some free pastries to sample and all Seniors get a 10% discount for any purchases. Just show them your My Senior Center Key Tag!

WEDNESDAY JULY 2

Ukelele Class

10:00 a.m. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Mount Wachusett Community College Outreach

11:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. Curious About College? Meet Michelle from MWCC! Michelle, a Recruitment Counselor from Mount Wachusett Community College, will be at the CAC. No appointment needed—just bring your curiosity and questions. At Winchendon CAC, 5 Summer Dr.

Chair Yoga Class

6:30-8:00 p.m. Come join us! \$15 per person. No need to sign up in advance. Water and Gatorade available for purchase. Any questions text Marti @ #978-821-9318. At the Snowbound Club, 130 Baldwinville Rd, Winchendon.

THURSDAY JULY 3

Fitchburg Art Museum and Farmers Market Trip

2:00-5:00 p.m. Free admission to the Art Museum! Sponsored by Old Murdock Senior Center. Home pick up available upon request or meet at the Senior Center (52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon) at 1:30 to get a ride. RIDES MUST BE SCHEDULED TO CONFIRM YOUR SEAT ON THE BUS. You can sign up online at www.townofwinchendon.com/council-aging or call the Senior Center at 978-297-3155.

Our Neighbor's Kitchen Dinner

5:15 p.m. at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church. Served in the Parish Hall. This week the menu is burger meal by Charlie O'Malley. Free-will donation \$2 per person, \$5 per family; no one turned away. 52 Spruce Street, Winchendon.

TUESDAY JULY 8

CFCE Storywalk at the Beals

10:00 a.m. Join us for an reading adventure! Discover the exciting stories we have waiting for you on the library lawn. This week: *Elephant and Piggie: A Big Guy Took My Ball*, by Mo Willems. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Vet to Vet Cafe

10:00-11:00 a.m. Are you a Veteran looking to connect with fellow vets and share experiences from your time in service? Join us for coffee, refreshments, and meaningful discussions with others who have served. Open to all Veterans in the local community. 2nd Tuesday of each month. At Broadview Assisted Living, 547 Central St, Winchendon.

Dementia Caregiver Support Group

5:30 p.m. Meets second Tuesday of each month. Facilitator: Olivia Companion, certified Dementia Practitioner and Montessori Dementia Care Professional. Free of charge. Call the Senior Center at 978-297-3155 to register. At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon.

WEDNESDAY JULY 9

Chair Yoga Class

6:30-8:00 p.m. Come join us! \$15 per person. No need to sign up in advance. Water and Gatorade available for purchase. Any questions text Marti @ #978-821-9318. At the Snowbound Club, 130 Baldwinville Rd, Winchendon.

THURSDAY JULY 10

Denis Cormier Concert

10:45 a.m. At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

Red Cross Emergency Preparedness

11:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

Our Neighbor's Kitchen Dinner

5:30 p.m. at UU Church of Winchendon. Dinner will be served in the Parish Hall; take-out available after indoor diners are served. This week's menu is TBA. Free-will donation \$2 per person, \$5 per family; no one turned away. 126 Central Street.

Movie Night at the Park: *Wicked* Sing-Along

7:00 p.m. Free to all! Bring your blankets, lawn chairs, and favorite snacks for a family-friendly sing-along screening of *Wicked*! Gates open at 7:00 p.m., movie starts at dusk. Sponsored by Winchendon Parks and Recreation. At Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Dr.

FRIDAY JULY 11

G.A.R. Park Concert Featuring The Ed Sullivans

5:00-7:00 p.m. Get ready for the best of the British Invasion & American Rock from the '60s & '70s! Free to all, bring your own lawn chairs or blankets. Sponsored by Winchendon Parks & Recreation. At G.A.R. Park, Murdock Ave and Grove St, Winchendon.

SATURDAY JULY 12

Neon Party Sunset Social

6:00-10:00 p.m. Light Up the Night! Wear your brightest neon - Dance under UV lights - Enjoy live DJ sets spinning the hottest tracks - Capture glowing memories with friends. To Register & For More Information see www.sunsetsocialsma.com/event/neon-party-social-2/register. Sponsored by Winchendon Community Park and Winchendon Parks & Recreation. Questions? contact info@farmingislife.org or richypena@yahoo.com. At Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Dr.

TUESDAY JULY 15

Growing Places Mobile Market

10:00-11:00 a.m. Fresh local produce. SNAP and HIP accepted. at Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

CFCE Storywalk at the Beals

10:00 a.m. Join us for an reading adventure! Discover the exciting stories we have waiting for you on the library lawn. This week: *Pete the Cat: Play Ball*, by James Dean. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

WEDNESDAY JULY 16

Teen Library Hide & Seek at the Beals

12:00 p.m. Explore hidden nooks and crannies throughout the library, hide in the stacks, and challenge friends and staff to find the best hiding place in the library! Limited space; registration required. Visit the library or call 978-297-0300. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Chair Yoga Class

6:30-8:00 p.m. Come join us! \$15 per person. No need to sign up in advance. Water and Gatorade available for purchase. Any questions text Marti @ #978-821-9318. At the Snowbound Club, 130 Baldwinville Rd, Winchendon.

THURSDAY JULY 17

Juggling Show & Workshop with Bryson Lang at the Beals

2:00 p.m. Enjoy and be amazed with comedy-juggler Bryson Lang! After the performance he'lll conduct a juggling clinic to teach the art form to the young participants. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Movie Night at the Park - *Inside Out 2*

7:00 p.m. (movie starts at dusk) Join us for an unforgettable evening under the stars with *Inside Out 2*! Bring your blankets, lawn chairs, and snacks as we dive back into the mind of Riley in this hilarious sequel! FREE admission, all are welcome! Sponsored by Winchendon Parks and Recreation. At Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Dr.

SATURDAY JULY 19

Blues Brew & BBQ at Winchendon Community Park

4:00-9:00 p.m. (ticketed) Join us for an unforgettable evening of Blues, Brew & BBQ featuring Cailte Kelley, followed by blues legend Anthony Geraci. BBQ food trucks. \$15 per person. Tickets at www.eventeny.com/events/blues-brew-bbq-19513/. Sponsored by Winchendon Parks & Recreation. At Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Dr.

Teen Night at the HUB

5:00-9:00 p.m. At the Winchendon Community HUB, 5 Summer Dr.

MONDAY JULY 21

Walking Beside You: Caregiver Support Group

6:00-7:00 p.m. We invite all parents, grandparents, and caregivers raising individuals who are neurodivergent, on the autism spectrum, or have other special needs. We aim to create a safe space to come together, support each other, and share the joys and challenges of raising individuals with unique needs. This group will also be a space to gain information, get advice, and hear about valuable community resources. Sponsored by See Beyond the Spectrum Initiative. For more information visit the library or see bealslibrary.org. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

TUESDAY JULY 22

CFCE Storywalk at the Beals

10:00 a.m. Join us for an reading adventure! Discover the exciting stories we have waiting for you on the library lawn. This week: *Pig the Pug: Pig the Winner*, by Aaron Blabey. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Dementia Care Training at the Senior Center

5:30 p.m. This month, "Dementia Challenges: A Montessori Approach to Success." Trainer: Olivia Companion, certified Dementia Practitioner and Montessori Dementia Care Professional. Fee: \$25. Call the Senior Center at 978-297-3155 to register. At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon.

WEDNESDAY JULY 23

Giant Game Day at the Beals

2:00 p.m. What's even better than board games? BIG board games! We'll have giant Janga, life-sized Candyland, super-sized Snakes and Ladders, and more! At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

THURSDAY JULY 24

Our Neighbor's Kitchen Dinner

5:30 p.m. at UU Church of Winchendon. Dinner will be served in the Parish Hall; take-out available after indoor diners are served. This week's menu is BBQ ribs, sides and dessert. Free-will donation \$2 per person, \$5 per family; no one turned away. 126 Central Street.

Family Game Night at the Beals

6:00-7:30 p.m. Gather your family, friends and your favorite game, and come join us for an evening of fun! Don't have a game? No worries, we'll provide plenty of options for you! At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Bingo at the HUB

7:00 p.m. Join the Winchendon Parks and Recreation for Bingo at the HUB!

Movie Night at the Park - *Paul Blart Mall Cop*

7:00 p.m. (movie starts at dusk) Get ready to laugh out loud with Paul Blart: Mall Cop under the stars! Bring your blankets, lawn chairs, and snacks for a hilarious, family-friendly comedy that's perfect for all ages. FREE admission—all are welcome! Sponsored by Winchendon Parks and Recreation. At Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Dr.

SATURDAY JULY 26

Escape the Library: Winchendon History Escape Room at the Beals

11:30 a.m.- 6:30 p.m. Working together as a group, participants will have an hour to use their wits, surroundings, problemsolving skills, and the historical contents of the library to uncover a mystery that highlights both the history of Winchendon and the Beals Memorial Library. To register for a time slot, contact the library at 978-297-0300. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Open Mic Night at Winchendon Community Park

4:00-8:00 p.m. Whether you're performing or just here to enjoy the vibes, it's a night you won't want to miss. Bring a blanket, some friends, and your love for local talent. FREE to all. Sponsored by Winchendon Parks and Recreation. At Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Dr.

2025



TUESDAY JULY 29

CFCE Storywalk at the Beals

10:00 a.m. Join us for an reading adventure! Discover the exciting stories we have waiting for you on the library lawn. This week: *Elephant and Piggie: Are You Ready to Play Outside*, by Mo Willems. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

SEPAC Meeting

6:30-7:30 p.m. Special Education Parent Advisory Council meeting held at the Senior Center and on Zoom. Link will be provided closer to the meeting date. At At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon.

WEDNESDAY JULY 30

Taste of Home Lunch & Birthday Celebration

11:00 a.m. Share in a home-style lunch cooked in the Old Murdock kitchen, and celebrate July birthdays! At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon.

Racecar Making & Races at the Beals

2:00-4:00 p.m. Rev your engines and race to the Library! Decorate your own racecar and get your car ready, set, and watch it go. Limited space; registration required—visit the library or call 978-297-0300. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

THURSDAY JULY 31

Our Neighbor’s Kitchen Dinner

5:30 p.m. at UU Church of Winchendon. Dinner will be served in the Parish Hall; take-out available after indoor diners are served. This week’s menu is TBA. Free-will donation \$2 per person, \$5 per family; no one turned away. 126 Central Street.

Family Trivia Night at the Beals

6:00 p.m. Does your family have what it takes to win the title of The Beals Brainiacs? Join us to compete with other families in a family trivia night to earn this honor! Registration not required but encouraged—visit the library or call 978-297-0300. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Movie Night at the Park - Disney Pixar *Cars*

7:00 p.m. (movie starts at dusk) Bring your blankets, lawn chairs, and little Lightning McQueens for an evening of laughs, heart, and high-speed adventure! FREE admission, all are welcome! Sponsored by Winchendon Parks and Recreation. At Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Dr.

RECURRING WEEKLY EVENTS

SUNDAYS

Bowling

12:00-5:00 p.m. \$25 for a lane per hour for up to 5 people. “Sober Sundays.” At The HUB (Winchendon CAC), 5 Summer Dr.

MONDAYS

Pickleball - Open Courts

9:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Gentle Yoga with Paula

10:00 a.m. \$5 suggested donation per class. This class is suitable for all abilities. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Congregate Lunch

11:00 a.m. \$3 suggested donation. Call the day before to reserve a lunch. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Friends’ Book and Used Media Sale

1:00-3::00 p.m. The Friends of the Library Book Sale is back! Browse a wide selection of used books, DVDs, puzzles, music and more. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St., Winchendon.

AA Meeting

7:30 p.m. Open meeting, all are welcome. UU Church of Winchendon, 126 Central Street.

Lego Club for Kids at the Beals

4:00-5:00 p.m. Join us for fun-filled afternoons building Lego creations straight from your imagination! For for information, contact the library at 978-297-0300. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St., Winchendon.

TUESDAYS

Pickleball - Open Courts

9:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Beginner Strength Training with Mary Lee

9:15-9:45 a.m. Get fit with these fun exercise classes that are customized for all abilities. \$5 suggested donation. Sign up online at www.townofwinchendon.com/council-aging or call the Senior Center. Rides available upon request. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Pickleball - Workshop Series, Beginner Level

9:30 a.m. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Intermediate Strength Training with Mary Lee

9:45-10:15 a.m. Get fit with these fun exercise classes that are customized for all abilities. \$5 suggested donation. Sign up online at www.townofwinchendon.com/council-aging or call the Senior Center. Rides available upon request. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Family Friendly Story Hour at the Chapel

10:00-11:00 a.m. For preschool age children. Parents must stay with their children for the story time. At the Chapel Downtown, 286 Central St, Winchendon.

Line Dancing with Mary Lee

10:30 a.m. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Yoga at the Beals Memorial Library

10:30 a.m. All skill levels welcomed! Mats and Blocks are available, if needed. These FREE classes are open for adults and teens. For more info, contact 978-297-0300, bealsmemoriallibrary@gmail.com or visit www.bealslibrary.org. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St., Winchendon.

Congregate Lunch

11:00 a.m. \$3 suggested donation. Call the day before to reserve a lunch. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Pickleball - Workshop Series, Intermediate Level

11:30 a.m. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Garden Series Class

12:30-1:30 p.m. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

WEDNESDAYS

Pickleball - Open Courts

9:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Gentle Yoga with Paula

10:00 a.m. \$5 suggested donation per class. This class is suitable for all abilities. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Zumbini

11:00 a.m. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Congregate Lunch

11:00 a.m. \$3 suggested donation. Call the day before to reserve a lunch. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Bingo!

12:30 p.m. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Meet-Up With the Kiwanis

6:30 p.m. 2ND AND 4TH WEDNESDAYS EACH MONTH. All are welcome! Come join in community projects, make new friends, make your community better, have some fun! Younger folks welcome. For more information, call Cailte Kelly, 978-413-9930. Hosted by Kiwanis of Winchendon MA. At the Clark Memorial YMCA Community Room, 155 Central St., Winchendon.

THURSDAYS

Pickleball - Open Courts

9:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Congregate Lunch

11:00 a.m. \$3 suggested donation. Call the day before to reserve a lunch. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

CFCE Preschool Playgroup at the Beals

1:00-2:00 p.m. Join us for an afternoon of free play, a craft, story time and music & movement. This program is in partnership with the Winchendon CFCE. Contact the library at 978-297-0300 for more information. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St., Winchendon.

Friends’ Book and Used Media Sale

5:00-7::00 p.m. The Friends of the Library Book Sale is back! Browse a wide selection of used books, DVDs, puzzles, music and more. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St., Winchendon.

FRIDAYS

Story Time at the Beals

10:00 a.m. Join us for a fun half hour of stories with Ms. Kristin and Ms. Melissa. This program is in partnership with the Winchendon Community Playgroups & CFCE. Contact the library at 978-297-0300 for more information. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St., Winchendon.

Lunch and Free Bowling for Seniors

10:30 a.m.- 12:30 p.m. Please call 978-297-3155 at least 24 hours in advance to reserve a lunch. Bowling is free for all seniors 55+. At the Winchendon Community HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

Bowling at the HUB

5:00-9:00 p.m. \$25 Lane/Hour/Up to 5 People, and shoes included! Sunshine cafe selling snack and beverages. Beer and wine for sale. 100% proceeds go to fundraise for the CAC programs and services. At The HUB (Winchendon CAC), 5 Summer Dr.

SATURDAYS

Shopping Transportation for Seniors

9:00 a.m. Leaves from the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. Must reserve your ride one week in advance. Call 978-297-3155.

Winchendon Farmers Market

10:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. At G.A.R. Park, Murdock Ave & Grove St., Winchendon. Rain or shine! Moves inside Old Murdock Senior Center next to park if it’s rainy.

Bowling at the HUB

5:00-9:00 p.m. \$25 Lane/Hour/Up to 5 People, and shoes included! Sunshine cafe selling snack and beverages Beer and wine for sale. 100% proceeds go to fundraise for the CAC programs and services. At The HUB (Winchendon CAC), 5 Summer Dr.

North Central Collective Greenhouse

5:30-7:00 p.m. Join us for a meal, message and worship. NCC is a collective of likeminded churches who purpose to establish a Gospel presence that leads to Gospel proclamation in our region. At The Chapel Downtown, 286 Central St, Winchendon.

For Kids

Lego Club for Kids at the Beals

Mondays, 4:00-5:00 p.m. Join us for fun-filled afternoons building Lego creations straight from your imagination! For for information, contact the library at 978-297-0300. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St., Winchendon.

Family Friendly Story Hour at the Chapel

Tuesdays, 10:00-11:00 a.m. For preschool age children. Parents must stay with their children for the story time. At the Chapel Downtown, 286 Central St, Winchendon.

CFCE Preschool Playgroup at the Beals

Thursdays, 1:00-2:00 p.m. Join us for an afternoon of free play, a craft, story time and music & movement. This program is in partnership with the Winchendon CFCE. Contact the library at 978-297-0300 for more information. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St., Winchendon.

Story Time at the Beals

Fridays, 10:00 a.m. Join us for a fun half hour of stories with Ms. Kristin and Ms. Melissa. This program is in partnership with the Winchendon Community Playgroups & CFCE. Contact the library at 978-297-0300 for more information. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St., Winchendon.

Juggling Show & Workshop with Bryson Lang at the Beals

July 17, 2:00 p.m. Enjoy and be amazed with comedy-juggler Bryson Lang! After the performance he'll conduct a juggling clinic to teach the art form to the young participants. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Giant Game Day at the Beals

July 23, 2:00 p.m. What's even better than board games? BIG board games! We'll have giant Janga, life-sized Candyland, super-sized Snakes and Ladders, and more! At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Family Game Night at the Beals

July 24, 6:00-7:30 p.m. Gather your family, friends and your favorite game, and come join us for an evening of fun! Don't have a game? No worries, we'll provide plenty of options for you! At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Escape the Library: Winchendon History Escape Room at the Beals

July 26, 11:30 a.m.- 6:30 p.m. Working together as a group, participants will have an hour to use their wits, surroundings, problemsolving skills, and the historical contents of the library to uncover a mystery that highlights both the history of Winchendon and the Beals Memorial Library. To register for a time slot, contact the library at 978-297-0300. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Racecar Making & Races at the Beals

July 30, 2:00-4:00 p.m. Rev your engines and race to the Library! Decorate your own racecar and get your car ready, set, and watch it go. Limited space; registration required—visit the library or call 978-297-0300. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Family Trivia Night at the Beals

July 31, 6:00 p.m. Does your family have what it takes to win the title of The Beals Brainiacs? Join us to compete with other families in a family trivia night to earn this honor! Registration not required but encouraged—visit the library or call 978-297-0300. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Recreation

Pickleball - Open Courts

Mon-Thur, 9:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Bowling

Sun, 12:00-5:00 p.m. \$25 for a lane per hour for up to 5 people. “Sober Sundays.” At The HUB (Winchendon CAC), 5 Summer Dr.

Bowling at the HUB

Fri-Sat, 5:00-9:00 p.m. \$25 Lane/Hour/Up to 5 People, and shoes included! Sunshine cafe selling snack and beverages Beer and wine for sale. 100% proceeds go to fundraise for the CAC programs and services. At The HUB (Winchendon CAC), 5 Summer Dr.

Bingo!

Wed, 12:30 p.m. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Bingo at the HUB

July 24, 7:00 p.m. Join Winchendon Parks and Recreation for Bingo at the HUB!

Beals Memorial Library 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon 978-297-0300 bealslibrary.org	Winchendon American Legion Post #193 295 School St., Winchendon 978-297-0754
Old Murdock Senior Center 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon 978-297-3155 facebook.com/oldmurdock	G.A.R. Park Grove St and Murdock Ave, Winchendon Winchendon Community Park 86 Ingleside Dr, Winchendon Winchendon Parks & Rec, 978-297-5410 facebook.com/Winchparksandrec
The HUB / Winchendon CAC 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon 978-287-1667 www.the-hub.org facebook.com/winchendoncac	Murdock Middle High School 3 Memorial Dr, Winchendon 978-297-1256 www.winchendonk12.org
UU Church of Winchendon 126 Central St, Winchendon 978-297-0554 uucw.ncmuuc.org	Clark Memorial YMCA 155 Central St 978-297-9622 www.theclarkymca.org
Immaculate Heart of Mary Church 52 Spruce St, Winchendon 978-297-0280 www.heartofmary.net	

Check out the full online town directory at
winchendoncourier.net/directory.htm
and the online community calendar at
winchendoncourier.net/index.html#connector

Food and Meals

Sippin’ Seniors

July 1, 6:30-9:30 a.m. Drop by Sippin’ Serendipity Cafe at 206 Main street and grab some locally roasted coffee and pastries while socializing with other Seniors! The Senior Center will provide some free pastries to sample and all Seniors get a 10% discount for any purchases. Just show them your My Senior Center Key Tag!

Our Neighbor’s Kitchen Dinner

July 3, 5:15 p.m. at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church. Served in the Parish Hall. Free-will donation \$2 per person, \$5 per family; no one turned away. 52 Spruce Street, Winchendon.

Vet to Vet Cafe

July 8, 10:00-11:00 a.m. Are you a Veteran looking to connect with fellow vets and share experiences from your time in service? Join us for coffee, refreshments, and meaningful discussions with others who have served. Open to all Veterans in the local community. 2nd Tuesday of each month. At Broadview Assisted Living, 547 Central St, Winchendon.

Our Neighbor’s Kitchen Dinner

July 10, 24 & 31, 5:30 p.m. at UU Church of Winchendon. Dinner will be served in the Parish Hall; take-out available after indoor diners are served. Free-will donation \$2 per person, \$5 per family; no one turned away. 126 Central Street.

Taste of Home Lunch & Birthday Celebration

July 30, 11:00 a.m. Share in a home-style lunch cooked in the Old Murdock kitchen, and celebrate July birthdays! At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon..

Congregate Lunch

Mon-Thur, 11:00 a.m. \$3 suggested donation. Call the day before to reserve a lunch. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Lunch and Free Bowling for Seniors

Fridays, 10:30 a.m.- 12:30 p.m. Please call 978-297-3155 at least 24 hours in advance to reserve a lunch. Bowling is free for all seniors 55+. At the Winchendon Community HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

Winchendon Farmers Market

Saturdays, 10:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. At G.A.R. Park, Murdock Ave & Grove St,, Winchendon. Rain or shine! Moves inside Old Murdock Senior Center next to park if it's rainy.

Growing Places Mobile Market

July 15, 10:00-11:00 a.m. Fresh local produce. SNAP and HIP accepted. at Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

Entertainment

Denis Cormier Concert

July 14, 10:45 a.m. At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

Movie Night at the Park: *Wicked Sing-Along*

July 10, 7:00 p.m. Free to all! Bring your blankets, lawn chairs, and favorite snacks for a family-friendly sing-along screening of *Wicked!* Gates open at 7:00 p.m., movie starts at dusk. Sponsored by Winchendon Parks and Recreation. At Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Dr.

G.A.R. Park Concert Featuring The Ed Sullivans

July 11, 5:00-7:00 p.m. Get ready for the best of the British Invasion & American Rock from the ‘60s & ‘70s! Free to all, bring your own lawn chairs or blankets. Sponsored by Winchendon Parks & Recreation. At G.A.R. Park, Murdock Ave and Grove St, Winchendon.

Neon Party Sunset Social

July 12, 6:00-10:00 p.m. Light Up the Night! Wear your brightest neon - Dance under UV lights - Enjoy live DJ sets spinning the hottest tracks - Capture glowing memories with friends. To Register & For More Information see www.sunsetsocialsma.com/event/neon-party-social-2/register. Sponsored by Winchendon Community Park and Winchendon Parks & Recreation. Questions? contact info@farmingislife.org or richypena@yahoo.com. At Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Dr.

Movie Night at the Park - *Inside Out 2*

July 17, 7:00 p.m. (movie starts at dusk) Join us for an unforgettable evening under the stars with *Inside Out 2!* Bring your blankets, lawn chairs, and snacks as we dive back into the mind of Riley in this hilarious sequel! FREE admission, all are welcome! Sponsored by Winchendon Parks and Recreation. At Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Dr.

Blues Brew & BBQ at Winchendon Community Park

July 19, 4:00-9:00 p.m. (ticketed) Join us for an unforgettable evening of Blues, Brew & BBQ featuring Cailte Kelley, followed by blues legend Anthony Geraci. BBQ food trucks. \$15 per person. Tickets at www.eventeny.com/events/blues-brew-bbq-19513/. Sponsored by Winchendon Parks & Recreation. At Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Dr.

Movie Night at the Park - *Paul Blart Mall Cop*

July 24, 7:00 p.m. (movie starts at dusk) Get ready to laugh out loud with Paul Blart: Mall Cop under the stars! Bring your blankets, lawn chairs, and snacks for a hilarious, family-friendly comedy that's perfect for all ages. FREE admission—all are welcome! Sponsored by Winchendon Parks and Recreation. At Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Dr.

Open Mic Night at Winchendon Community Park

July 26, 4:00-8:00 p.m. Whether you're performing or just here to enjoy the vibes, it's a night you won't want to miss. Bring a blanket, some friends, and your love for local talent. FREE to all. Sponsored by Winchendon Parks and Recreation. At Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Dr.

Movie Night at the Park - Disney Pixar *Cars*

July 31, 7:00 p.m. (movie starts at dusk) Bring your blankets, lawn chairs, and little Lightning McQueens for an evening of laughs, heart, and high-speed adventure! FREE admission, all are welcome! Sponsored by Winchendon Parks and Recreation. At Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Dr.

For Teens

Teen Library Hide & Seek at the Beals

July 16, 12:00 p.m. Explore hidden nooks and crannies throughout the library, hide in the stacks, and challenge friends and staff to find the best hiding place in the library! Limited space; registration required. Visit the library or call 978-297-0300. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Teen Night at the HUB

July 19, 5:00-9:00 p.m. At the Winchendon Community HUB, 5 Summer Dr.

Winchendon News

Winchendon Youth Art Club Ends A Great First Year with Art Showcase at the HUB

by Inanna Arthen

The Winchendon Youth Art Club, made up of around 20 students from Murdock Middle School, wrapped up their first year with a party and a display of some of their art creations at the HUB on Thursday, June 5. The bowling alley was in use, music was playing, snacks were shared, and the space was crowded with students, their families, and people who came to see the art and support the young artists.

The Youth Art Club was the inspiration of its leaders Gloria Wirtz and Jaime Gaudette, and is one of the most successful projects funded through the CAC/HEAL Collaborative “mini-grants” of \$1,000 that were awarded last year. Ms. Gaudette also was awarded a \$300 grant from the Winchendon Cultural Council. The Art Club met in teacher Jonathan Rose’s classroom with the permission of MMS Principal Dr. Mayo. The project also had the support of the Winchendon Community Heart & Soul project.

MMS student Emma Keney, one of those who had the idea for the club, told the *Courier*, “There wasn’t really much in my school to do for fun activities. I like art. It was really fun, I really liked it.” The club met on Thursdays once a month, she said. Asked if she might be interested in art as a profession, Emma said, “Yeah, I’d be down to do that. I really like art, and I feel like I’m definitely getting a lot better.” She had some pieces on display at the Art Festival in Murdock High School last month.

Club leader Jaime Gaudette is also Emma’s mom. The *Courier* asked how she got inspired to act on the idea. She said her daughter “really wanted to

join an after-school activity, but she’s not into sports, so she wanted to do an art club. And I had asked a couple years in a row if they were gonna do an art club, and they kept saying maybe, and it wasn’t happening. And then we heard they were cutting art completely. So we decided to get a grant and just form our own art club. And luckily, they did not end up cutting art.”

They applied for the mini-grant and succeeded. Under the terms of the grant, the money had to be spent within three months. The \$300 additional from the Cultural Council helped pay for additional supplies. “We didn’t really know what the kids were going to want to do for the rest of the year,” she said. “So it was nice to have that extra \$300 so that when supplies ran out, we could go get more, because we didn’t know they were going to be so into painting. We ran out of canvases and paint very fast. We had to keep making more trips back to Michaels.”

Ms. Gaudette said that Ms. Wirtz and her daughter would be carrying on the club next year. The Art Showcase was organized by Ms. Wirtz. “We had planned on doing an art show, yeah, but I hadn’t specifically put a lot of thought into it. Gloria actually put all of this together, and it was amazing,” Ms. Gaudette said.

The Winchendon Youth Art Club isn’t just about art—it’s about emotional and social development, learning leadership and teamwork skills, self-discovery and building self-worth through creative expression. For more information, see www.thehealcollaborative.org/artclub or contact Jaime Gaudette or Gloria Wirtz.



One of the dozen or so display tables filled with students’ work
Photo by Inanna Arthen



All of the artists with the Art Club leaders
Photo by Shaina Cunningham

Economic Development Task Force Members Needed

The Town of Winchendon is in search of five residents with relevant professional experience to serve on the Economic Development Task Force.

The Economic Development Task Force purpose is to identify, promote, and facilitate opportunities for sustainable economic growth in Winchendon. The primary focus will be on attracting new investment and encouraging responsible land development through proactive business engagement and the development of strategic incentives, while supporting the retention and expansion of existing businesses.

Key Objectives:

- Locate and engage with prospective businesses across a range of industries.
- Encourage new investment and land development in town.
- Develop a strategic economic development plan aligned with the town’s long-term goals.
- Serve as an advisory group to the Board of Selectmen, providing policy and program recommendations.
- Generate a list of properties and parcels of land for sale and/or ready for development.
- Target developers who specialize in rural or small-town projects.

If interested sent letters of interest to ddennis@winchendon-ma.gov or mail to Town of Winchendon, Attn: Debra Dennis, 109 Front Street Winchendon MA 01475.

Winchendon Named One of “10 Quirkiest Massachusetts Towns to Visit in 2025” by World Atlas

by Inanna Arthen

The website WorldAtlas.com has named Winchendon one of the top 10 “quirkiest” (in a good way) towns in Massachusetts for day-trippers and vacationers to visit in 2025. “Massachusetts has its share of stately commons and postcard-perfect towns, but skip Boston and some of the biggest tourist traps in America, and you’ll find that this state starts to get quirky,” the piece begins. Winchendon joins such better-known and less surprising honorees as Salem, Concord, Sturbridge and Shelburne Falls to make the list.

Adam Bogosh writes, “Winchendon doesn’t just have a small-town vibe; it has a giant rocking horse. Clyde, the 12-foot-tall wooden horse standing near the Winchendon History and Cultural Center, is a nod to the town’s 19th-century nickname: “Toy Town.” That same center also features rotating exhibits on local industry and life, including a collection of handcrafted toys from the area’s manufacturing heyday. For those who like their antiques with a side of different, Toy Town Stained Glass and Antiques offers everything from secondhand tools to custom-made windows. This Massachusetts town has something for outdoor lovers, though it’s not nearly as quirky. Lake Dennison Recreation Area, just west of town, has hiking trails, swimming spots, and campsites across over 121 acres of land.”

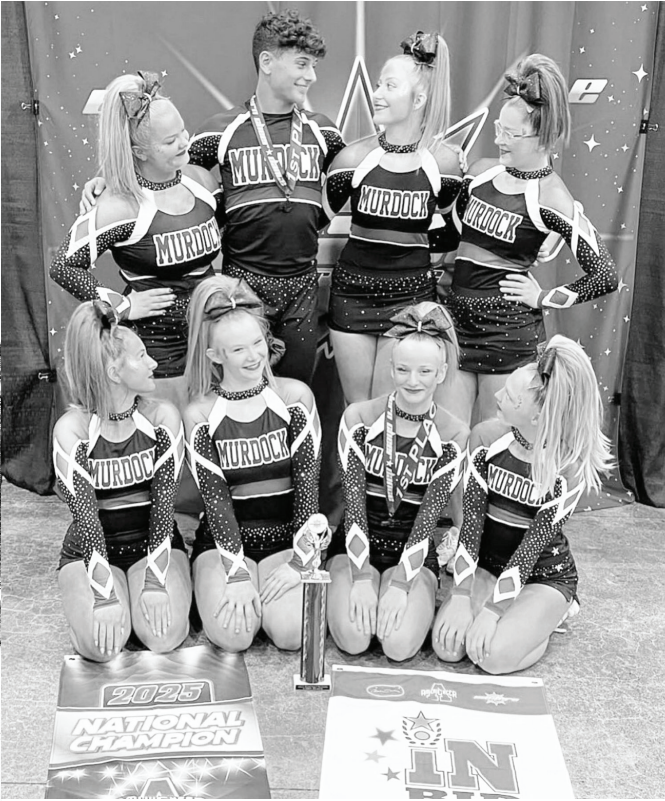
Read the entire article at www.worldatlas.com/cities/10-quirkiest-massachusetts-towns-to-visit-in-2025.html



Buy Local Winchendon has been promoting local business since it launched at Fall Fest 2023. It is funded by the Robinson Broadhurst Foundation and organized through the cooperation of Growing Places, Inc. and the HEAL Collaborative. Follow Buy Local Winchendon on Facebook @buylocalwinchendon, and check out the website at

buylocalwinchendon.com

Murdock Cheer Team Leaps to National Title



Photos courtesy of Sammi Salem

by Jill Nicholson Sackett

A long year of practice, competitions of increasing difficulty, and steadfast determination brought Murdock High School Varsity Cheer Team to the national spotlight at the Great Smoky Open Nationals Competition held on May 10, 2025 in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. The eight-member team competed in the School/Rec division against ten other national finalists. Their routines were judged across several categories such as difficulty, execution, creativity and performance quality. Not only did Murdock place 1st in their division—they outscored every team across all School/Rec divisions, earning Murdock the “High Point Champion” title with their personal best score of 91.56.

The national championship team included Seniors/Captains Emily Bradley and Lily Cyganiewicz, Junior/Captain Clayton Tenney, Sophomores Emily Croteau and Addison Miller, Freshmen Meghan Wightman and Breelynn Anderson, and 7th grader Macy Rose. Leading the intrepid athletes is Head Coach Sammi Salem, who stepped into her role only this year. Sammi spoke with admiration, “While we started the season a bit rocky, the team came together with incredible determination, hard work and heart. The progress we made in just a few months was nothing short of inspiring, and it’s been amazing to watch this group grow into strong, competitive athletes.”

The path to Nationals was not guaranteed. The team’s journey began before the start of the school year with a multi-day summer camp and an immersion weekend dedicated to forming the choreography for the competition routine. During the school year, they practiced 3-4 days a week and performed at the home football games on Friday nights. The start of competition season in October saw the addition of some Saturday practices.

Beyond the gym, the team logged many hours of community service, team bonding activities and fundraising events. Sammi noted, “We believe in giving back to the town that continuously supports us, and it helps the team build strong relationships on and off the mat.”

Each competition got them closer to their goal, providing experience, confidence and fine-tuning of their routine. League and regional performances and wins led to a final state championship, where they earned second place by less than a single point and secured a spot at Nationals in Tennessee.

The team returned to a well-deserved celebratory rally held at the Murdock football field on Thursday, May 15. “This championship isn’t just a win for the cheer team—it’s a win for our entire community,” said Superintendent Dr. Marc Gosselin. “These athletes represent the strength, spirit, and determination that make Murdock special, and we are thrilled to honor them for this truly exceptional accomplishment.”

No time to rest on their laurels — thanks to their win at Nationals and the high point title, the High School Varsity Cheer Team secured a paid bid to the international competition in Orlando, Florida in 2026. This is a first for Murdock and a significant step forward for the program. Training, fundraising and preparing will continue unabated.

Two of the national titlists are graduating and the Murdock cheer program continues to grow. Annual tryouts are held near the end of the school year. Sammi encourages interested students to attend, advising “We welcome athletes with all experience levels and are especially looking for those who are committed, positive, and team-oriented.”

Murdock High School may be small, but it’s making a mighty mark.



Meet some special animal friends at the Beals on June 26, when Animal Adventures joins the Summer Reading Kickoff Party!
Photo courtesy of Beals Memorial Library

Level Up Your Summer at the Beals Memorial Library with Summer Reading

The Beals Memorial Library in Winchendon invites the whole community to get on board for this year’s annual Summer Reading Club from June 23 to August 15! This year’s theme is “Level Up at Your Library,” which means it’s all about games! There will be fun programs, activities, stories, and more for the whole family to enjoy, including a Juggling Show & Workshop with performer Bryson Lang, a Winchendon history escape room, Giant Game Day, four game-themed Story Walks, and more! Sign ups begin on Monday, June 16, for this exciting eight-week program!

The Summer Reading Club is open to participants of all ages. Register at the library to receive your reading log and take part in the program. Read whatever you would like. Whether it’s books, audio-books, fanfiction, webtoons, newspapers, or reading to children, all types of reading counts! Log your reading and earn rewards! Those who complete the full reading log will also earn a chance to win the 2025 Summer Reading Club Grand Prize! Please note: all participants are eligible to receive only one reading log of prizes per person.

Finally, each week during the Summer Reading Club, the library’s new dragon mascot, Paperback, will be playing hide and seek throughout the first floor of the library. Kids who play hide and seek with Paperback will get to earn a small prize from the dragon’s treasure chest!

On Thursday, June 26, at 2:00 p.m., the library will hold the Summer Reading Club Kickoff Party, featuring some furry, feathery, and scaly special guests courtesy of Animal Adventures! We’ll celebrate the start of summer reading while getting to meet some interesting animals and hear some wild stories about them. Animal Adventures offers a unique learning experience to be enjoyed by all.

The Beals Memorial Library’s Summer Reading Club’s programs and events are sponsored in partnership with the Friends of the Beals Library, the Winchendon CFCE, the Winchendon Cultural Council, the Winchendon Public Schools and the See Beyond the Spectrum Initiative.

The library is located at 50 Pleasant Street in Winchendon. For more information, contact the library at 978-297-0300 or visit bealslibrary.org/summer.

Regional News and Events

Gardening



A second planting after harvesting your first crop is possible if there is enough time for it to mature and be harvested before the end of the growing season.
Photo courtesy of MelindaMyers.com

Maximize Your Harvest with Succession Planting

by Melinda Myers

Make the most of every square inch of garden space and containers with succession planting. As you harvest your first crop of the season, consider replanting the space with a vegetable that will mature and can be harvested before the end of the growing season.

Start by calculating the number of frost-free days remaining in your growing season. Next review the plant tags and seed packets for the number of days from planting to harvest. Compare these two to see if you have time to replant one or maybe even two more quick-maturing vegetables in that space.

Keep in mind that cool season crops like lettuce, spinach and radishes perform and taste best when grown and harvested during the cooler months of spring and fall. Consider using these quick-maturing vegetables as your last planting of the season.

Others, like broccoli, collards and kale, taste even better after a light frost. Planting these so they mature in fall is another way to extend the harvest for maximum flavor and nutrition.

Warm season vegetables, like beans and cucumbers, are perfect for a summer planting. They prefer warm air and soil for the best growth and productivity.

Here are a few vegetables you may want to include in your succession planting this summer. Leaf lettuce and spinach prefer cooler temperatures

and depending on the variety are ready to harvest in 30 to 60 days. If you can't wait for cooler weather, try growing more heat-tolerant greens, like Sandy and Red Sails lettuce, and although they are not true spinaches New Zealand and Malabar are more heat tolerant and provide a similar flavor.

End the season with a harvest of peas. Short varieties, like Patio Pride and Sugar Ann sugar snap peas and Maestro and Laxton's Progress #9 shelling peas, are perfect for containers and small spaces.

Root crops make great additions to succession plantings. Salad radishes are ready to harvest in 25 to 30 days, beets in 50 to 60 days, and carrots in 60 to 70 days.

Bush beans prefer warm temperatures and are ready to begin picking in 50 to 80 days. Mascotte compact snap beans are productive compact plants perfect for containers and window boxes. You'll start harvesting these in as few as 50 days.

Cucumbers and summer squash are another option for summer plantings. Vining varieties can be trained onto a support to save space or crawl over the ground. Bush types are perfect for containers and small spaces. Check the seed packet for the number of days from planting to harvest.

Increase the health and productivity of your second planting by preparing the soil before planting seeds and transplants. Mix an inch of quality compost into the top six inches of soil. You'll improve drainage in heavy soil, increase water retention in fast-draining sandy soils, and add micronutrients that feed the soil, building microorganisms.

Once your seeds and transplants are in the ground, be sure to water properly. Keep the seedbed and roots of transplants moist the first few weeks. Gradually reduce watering frequency as seedlings sprout and grow and transplants become established.

You may need to adjust your succession planting schedule based on the weather. Hotter and cooler than normal temperatures can delay seed germination, harvest times, and flavor.

With a bit of planning, succession plantings, and regular harvesting you can enjoy fresh vegetables throughout the growing season.

Melinda Myers has written over 20 gardening books, including *The Midwest Gardener's Handbook, 2nd Edition* and *Small Space Gardening*. She hosts *The Great Courses "How to Grow Anything" DVD series* and the nationally-syndicated *Melinda's Garden Moment* radio program. Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for *Birds & Blooms* magazine and her web site is www.MelindaMyers.com.

Enjoying this Special Print Edition of the Winchendon Courier Online? Please share your thoughts!

Would you like to see a regular print edition of the Courier?

- ☐ Yes, once a month
- ☐ Yes, twice a month
- ☐ Yes, every week
- ☐ No, I'm happy reading the online version

Would you pay for the Courier on a newsstand?

- ☐ Yes, more than \$1.00
- ☐ Yes, but only if it's \$1.00 or less
- ☐ No

Would you pay for a subscription to the print edition? If so, how much would seem fair?

What do you think of the new print edition of the Courier?

Before you saw the print edition, did you know about the online weekly Courier?

- ☐ Yes, I read it regularly
- ☐ Yes, but I seldom/never read it
- ☐ No, I didn't know it existed online

Please send your replies to By Light Unseen Media LLC, 325 Lakeview Dr, Winchendon, MA, 01475, or email to editor@winchendoncourier.net.

Fill out this survey online!



<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScDrTzG64NdoEsj6fasDe3Hbq8f-5JPkyQJMt8WQZmKxsrY7g/viewform?usp=header>

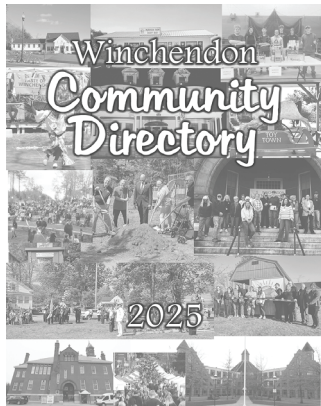
Senior Workoff Program Applications for FY26 Available on Town Website

Applications for the Senior Property Tax Work-Off program for FY26 (July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026) are now available at www.townofwinchendon.com/home/news/fy26-senior-work-application.

This program allows eligible senior citizens to do odd jobs for the town in exchange for an offset in their property taxes. The credit is equivalent to \$15 per hour for a maximum of \$1,100 per household during the fiscal year.

To qualify, a senior must be at least 60 years old, own and occupy a home in Winchendon, have an annual income of less than \$40,150 if single or a combined household income of less than \$45,900 if married, have transportation to work, and be able to work during regular business hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Available jobs are variable and include work that accommodates different levels of ability. See the full application for more details.



The printed Winchendon Community Directory, listing businesses, organizations, groups, entrepreneurs and crafters in Winchendon, is now available! Look for it in local stores and community centers. Supplies are limited!

Community Notice Board

Town Committee Monthly Meetings by Week
All Meetings in Town Hall

week	MON	TUE	WED	THUR
1st	Communications Committee 4:30pm Board of Health 6:00pm	Planning Board 6:00pm		School Committee 6:00pm
2nd	Board of Selectmen 6:30pm	Finance Committee 7:00pm	Agricultural Commission 7:00pm	Conservation Commission 6:00pm
3rd		Planning Board 6:00pm	Winchendon Redevelopment Authority 5:00pm Zoning Board of Appeals 7:00pm	School Committee 6:00pm
4th	Board of Selectmen 6:30pm			

Agendas, minutes and meeting recordings available on the Town website at Agendas, Minutes & Past Meetings, as well as on the pages for each Board or Committee.

Boards may cancel or change times for meetings, or add extra meetings, based on specific business at hand. Check the Town Meetings Calendar tab at <https://www.townofwinchendon.com/>

Town of Winchendon
109 Front Street
Winchendon, Massachusetts 01475-1758
Legal Notice
Winchendon Conservation Commission

Pursuant to the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 131, Section 40, and the Town of Winchendon Wetlands Protection Bylaw, the Winchendon Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing on Thursday, July 10, 2025 at 6:05 pm to consider the Request for Determination of Applicability filed by Fred Calvin Miller for proposed work within the 100-foot Buffer Zone to Bordering Vegetated Wetlands at 155 Fourth Street, Assessor’s Map M4, Parcel 4. The proposed work includes installation of a well and second means of egress. Repair of a sea wall, deck/patio and septic, tree removal. The hearing will be held in the Second Floor Auditorium at Town Hall - 109 Front St., Winchendon, MA 01475. Alternative translation and accommodation for disabled persons is available by advance request.
For additional information email mmarro@townofwinchendon.com.

Town of Winchendon
109 Front Street
Winchendon, Massachusetts 01475-1758
Legal Notice
Winchendon Conservation Commission

Pursuant to the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 131, Section 40, and the Town of Winchendon Wetlands Protection Bylaw, the Winchendon Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing on Thursday, July 10, 2025 at 6:05 pm to consider the Request for Determination of Applicability filed by Linda Baum for proposed work within the 50-foot Buffer Zone to Bordering Vegetated Wetlands at 366 Lakeview Drive, Assessor’s Map M15, Parcel 9. The proposed work includes replenishment of beach sand on the property. The hearing will be held in the Second Floor Auditorium at Town Hall - 109 Front St., Winchendon, MA 01475. Alternative translation and accommodation for disabled persons is available by advance request.
For additional information email mmarro@townofwinchendon.com.

THE WINCHENDON COURIER
A Publication of By Light Unseen Media, LLC
325 Lakeview Drive
Winchendon, MA 01475

Publisher and Managing Editor: Inanna Arthen

Production, Design and Pre-Press: Inanna Arthen

To submit news, letters to the editor, obituaries or calendar listings:
email editor@winchendoncourier.net
or mail to 325 Lakeview Dr., Winchendon, MA 01475

Text event listings are free of charge for non-profit, community and town organizations and groups, and for charitable or benefit events. Short text articles about forthcoming local events are free of charge. Display ads are published on a fee-only basis.

For information about display and classified ad rates and requirements, contact the Publisher at the above email or address.

The print edition is printed by Eagle Printing in Pittsfield, MA.

Toy Town FYIs

Transfer Station Hours

Wednesday 12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Thursday 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. (summer hours)
Friday 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Saturday 8:00 a.m. 4:00 p.m.
653 River Street
978-297-0395
Sticker price: \$85 (\$25 for additional stickers)
Pay-As-You-Throw bags required
33-gallon, \$5.00 per bag, 16-gallon, \$3.00 per bag as of July 1, 2025
2025-2026 Transfer Station sticker now on sale in Town Hall and at the Transfer Station.

Sign up for Code Red Emergency Alerts

Sign up for our emergency notification program today! Receive up-to-date information before, during and after an emergency in your neighborhood. You can choose to be notified via voice, text and email notifications of emergency and inclement weather alerts. Click the link below for information and sign-up.
www.townofwinchendon.com/home/news/sign-code-red-emergency-alerts

Is Your House Number Clearly Visible from the Street?

The Winchendon Fire Department reminds all residents to make sure their house number is clearly visible for first responders who may need to find you. Numbers should be at least four inches high and facing the street, with lighting if possible. Put numbers on a contrasting background so they will stand out. If your driveway is long, put the number on a mailbox or pole on the street or at the end of driveway, facing in both directions. (Reflective numbers are helpful.) Check your house numbers to make sure foliage has not grown up in front of them without your being aware of it.

Report a Pothole to the DPW

You can report potholes directly to the DPW using this form on the town website:
www.townofwinchendon.com/public-works/webforms/report-pothole

Winchendon Town Hall & Transfer Station Now Accepting Credit/Debit Payments

We are excited to announce that the DPW, Treasurer/Collector’s Office and the Transfer Station can all now accept in-person credit and debit card payments. This means next time you need to purchase or pay for:
Trash bags
Transfer station stickers
Excise bills
Tax bills
Water & Sewer bills
And more
You can pay with a credit or debit card! (subject to a convenience fee).

Town of Winchendon
109 Front Street
Winchendon, Massachusetts 01475-1758
Legal Notice
Winchendon Conservation Commission

Pursuant to the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 131, Section 40, and the Town of Winchendon Wetlands Protection Bylaw, the Winchendon Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing on Thursday, July 10, 2025 at 6:05 pm to consider the Request for Determination of Applicability filed by Scott Crichton for proposed work within the 50-foot Buffer Zone to Bordering Vegetated Wetlands at 206 Lakeview Drive, Assessor’s Map M10, Parcel 24. The proposed work includes addition of a driveway. The hearing will be held in the Second Floor Auditorium at Town Hall - 109 Front St., Winchendon, MA 01475. Alternative translation and accommodation for disabled persons is available by advance request.
For additional information email mmarro@townofwinchendon.com.

Town of Winchendon
109 Front Street
Winchendon, Massachusetts 01475-1758
Legal Notice
Winchendon Conservation Commission

Pursuant to the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 131, Section 40, and the Town of Winchendon Wetlands Protection Bylaw, the Winchendon Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing on Thursday, July 10, 2025 at 6:05 pm to consider the Request for Determination of Applicability filed by Dillis & Roy Civil Design Group, Inc. for proposed work within the 50-foot Buffer Zone to Bordering Vegetated Wetlands at 574 Brown Street, Assessor’s Map 4, Parcel 39. The proposed work includes site grading related to septic system leach area installation. The hearing will be held in the Second Floor Auditorium at Town Hall - 109 Front St., Winchendon, MA 01475. Alternative translation and accommodation for disabled persons is available by advance request.
For additional information email mmarro@townofwinchendon.com.

Community Notice Board

Take the TOY TOWN TROLLEY On Saturdays! FREE!

Beginning on Saturday, January 11, the Toy Town Trolley will be making three circuits around Winchendon and up to the Rindge shopping areas every Saturday. Rides are FREE to all residents! This service is funded by a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) and sponsored by the Town of Winchendon, the Winchendon CAC, the Winchendon Council on Aging and the Winchendon CCAP Task Force.

Each circuit will start at Hyde Park and stop at the end of Pearl Drive, the Town Hall bus shelter, Dollar Tree Plaza, the YMCA/GFA bus shelter, CVS, the fire station bus shelter, Ipswich Drive, the end of Ready Drive, the end of Goodrich Drive and the Winchendon Community Park. From there the trolley will head up 202 (so you don't have to!) and stop to let off shoppers at Tractor Supply, Market Basket/Marshalls, Walmart and Hannaford. It then returns to Not Just Produced and Sippin' Serendipity and immediately starts its next circuit with Hyde Park. Shoppers who were let off on the first through fourth circuits can reboard the trolley for home when it returns.

The first circuit starts at Hyde Park at 9:15 a.m. and the last circuit leaves Hannaford at 2:51 p.m.

For a grid of the complete updated schedule with times, see https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/u/0/d/1E0NiGrFeB_wtjV61TCosVYm0p-5g4dKQ6vExvOrI9288/htmlview. For a map of the route, see bit.ly/3W9g-GYG. Printed copies are available at the Senior Center (52 Murdock Ave), Winchendon CAC/The Hub (5 Summer Dr), the Clark YMCA (155 Central St) and Not Just Produced (290 Central St).

If you have questions, concerns or suggestions, contact winchendon-ccap@gmail.com or call 978-297-3155.

Questions or Concerns? Email the Town Manager!

A one-click email form has been added to the town website for all residents who would like to contact the Town Manager with concerns and questions about things happening in the community. The button is at the top of the left column of buttons under "Citizen Action Center" on the left side of the website's front page. The direct link is: <https://www.townofwinchendon.com/home/webforms/contact-us>

Applications Open for Vendor Spaces at the 2025 Fall Festival

The 9th Annual Winchendon Fall Festival, to be held on Saturday, October 11, 2025 from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., is now accepting applications for vendor spaces on Central Street. Contact Nicole Roberts at nroberts@winchendon-ma.gov or 978-297-3537 with any questions or if you wish to volunteer on the day of the event. (We always need more help!) Again, we wish to express our gratitude to everyone for their continued support of this great event.

Access the application information at:

www.townofwinchendon.com/9th-annual-winchendon-fall-festival/pages/2025-fall-festival-vendor-application

Winchendon Lions Want to Welcome You!

The Winchendon Lions meet at the Winchendon American Legion Post 193, 295 School St., downstairs hall, 7:00 p.m.

Meetings are on the third Tuesday of each month, September through June. Dues are used for all Administrative cost, which is why we can say "All money received through fundraisers go back to the community, eye research, or other natural disasters around the world!"

Feel free to join us and try it out. We would love to see you!

If you have any questions feel free to call Joni 978-297-2753. Please leave a message if no answer!

"WHERE THERE'S A NEED, THERE IS A LION"

Did You Forget to Cash a Check? Town of Winchendon Unclaimed Monies List

The Winchendon Collector/Treasurer has released the current list of tailings (uncashed checks). You can view it at <https://www.townofwinchendon.com/home/news/town-winchendon-notice-unclaimed-monies>. If your name is on the list, please contact the Collector/Treasurer at 978-297-0152 so you can be provided with the proper claim forms.

Town Street List and 2024 Town Reports Available

Copies of the 2025 Winchendon Street List of Residents are available at the Town Clerk's office in Winchendon Town Hall, 109 Front St. The cost is \$17 each, \$14 for seniors.

The 2024 Town Report is available as a downloadable PDF on the town website at <https://www.townofwinchendon.com/home/pages/2024-annual-report>.

Town Committee Vacancies as of April 14, 2025

If you'd like to be an active participant in decision-making and management for your community, consider joining a town committee or board. There are a number of vacancies currently open.

Cultural Council - 13 vacancies

Fence Viewer and Field Driver - 1 vacancy

Finance Committee - 1 vacancy

Historical District Commission - 2 alternate vacancies

Parks & Recreation - 1 vacancy

Zoning Board of Appeals - 1 alternate vacancy

If you'd like more information about any of these positions or are interested in being considered for an appointment, contact the Town Manager's office at 978-297-0085, or send a letter of interest to ddennis@winchendon-ma.gov or Town Manager, 109 Front Street Dept. 1, Winchendon MA 01475.

For a description of each board or committee, see: https://www.townofwinchendon.com/sites/g/files/vyhli8401/f/uploads/july_town_boards_and_commissions.pdf (PDF).

Fire Department Offering Free COVID-19 Test Kits to Residents

To all Winchendon residents, the Winchendon Fire Department has been able to secure multiple boxes of COVID-19 home test kits at no cost through a program with MA State DPH. Feel free to stop by the station and pick up what you need for you and your family. Here at WFD we will continue to search for ways to bring any additional care possible to our residents. The Fire Department is located at 405 Central St, Winchendon, and the business phone number is 978-297-2324.

Opening on the Finance Committee as of July 1

The Finance Committee will have a vacancy effective July 1, 2025. The duty of the Committee is to investigate the financial affairs of the town, including receipts of and expenditures by the different departments, or any Town Officer; the methods in which the town business is conducted; the general conduct of the town affairs; and all the articles in town warrants for town meetings referred to it; and, in the discharge of its duties, shall have free access to all books of accounts, books of record and all accounts, bills, and vouchers on which money has been or may be paid from the town treasury. If interested in serving on the Finance Committee, send letters of interest with your experience to ddennis@winchendon-ma.gov or mail to Town of Winchendon, Attn: Debra Dennis, 109 Front Street, Winchendon MA 01475

FREE Meals for KIDS all summer long at Toy Town Elementary!

"Summer Eats" program run by Project Bread will run at Toy Town Elementary School, 175 Grove Street, Winchendon.

- All kids and teens up to age 18!
- Program runs June 23 through August 15, 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. Closed July 4
- Free lunch Monday through Thursday!
- NO ID or Registration required!
- Kids do not need to be residents of Winchendon or enrolled in Winchendon Public Schools
- Fun activities each day!
- No grab and go options available. Lunches will be served on site.

For more information, see <https://projectbread.org/summer-eats-program>

Advertise in the Winchendon Courier!

The *Winchendon Courier* Online is uploaded every Thursday night and reaches hundreds of Winchendon readers every week. The monthly print edition of the *Winchendon Courier* has a press run of 500 and an uptake of over 90 percent. The press run will be increased as circulation and demand grow.

If you're a business owner, entrepreneur, local organization or individual, contact us for information about display ad requirements and rates. We offer:

- Free ad design services for our paying advertisers, if desired
- Discounted annual rate for advertisers who commit to a full year of weekly ads
- Automatic placement of their ad in the monthly print addition, at no extra charge, for advertisers who place their ad for a full month in the online edition
- A range of sizes from business card to (in the print edition) full page
- Flexibility—if you have questions about formatting or dimensions, contact us.

For a rate card, more information or questions, contact:

editor@winchendoncourier.net

Saturday Festivals Aren’t Stopped by Cool Rainy Weather

by Inanna Arthen

For many years before Founders Day launched in 2023, Winchendon’s biggest summer celebration took place the third weekend of June, when the Clark Memorial YMCA’s Summer Solstice Fair (sponsored by Athol Savings Bank), the Unitarian Universalist Church of Winchendon’s Summer Lawn Fair and Immaculate Heart of Mary Church’s Strawberry Festival all were held at the same time. Winchendon residents and visitors could spend a full day visiting vendors and tables set up by local organizations, listening to live music, and enjoying food—even if they didn’t work the calories off in the Clark’s 5K road race to start the day. At 11:00 a.m. the Clark would hold a parade with town groups and businesses taking part, marching from the Fire Station to Blair Square. All of Central Street would be lined with lawn chairs and people standing along the curb to cheer the marchers and catch swag and treats tossed to the crowd.

In the last five years, the COVID shutdowns and a couple of very rainy weekends put a crimp into these annual events, with the parade cancelled several times, and vendors moved inside or under large tents. Winchendon has been missing its midsummer main street tradition, and Founders Day at the Community Park just isn’t the same.

So, even though Saturday morning, June 14 started out chilly and wet, with light rain falling, none of the scheduled events was cancelled. Over at the Clark, two full rows of vendors and organizations set up tables and tents. Multiple enormous “bounce house” attractions were inflated on the field. The CAC/Youth Changemakers/Kiwanis food tent stretched out in front of the field house, selling drinks, snacks, freshly grilled hamburgers and hot dogs and other menu items. All proceeds went to benefit the Kiwanis club and programs and services at the CAC Community Hub. The food tent also had some donated fresh local produce to give away free to anyone who wanted it. Other food trucks offered ice cream treats. The outdoor flatbed stage for musicians was ready for its live performers.

Best of all, the parade marched down Central Street right on time. By then, the intermittent sprinkles and showers had given up and the street was lined with families venturing out to see the parade and explore the vendors and activities. Marchers included veterans and the American Legion Auxiliary, Scouts and school sports teams, the National Champion Cheerleaders with their trophies held high, Murdock Farm with one of their new baby calves on a flatbed trailer, tow trucks from Brooks Automotive, members of the Board of Selectmen, and many more.

The UUCW Lawn Fair was packed with vendors and tents, including the Winchendon Garden Club’s annual array of raffle baskets, and local crafters, some old-timers and some new this year. A food truck was vending burgers, fries, fried dough and other favorite fair treats, while UUCW ran its traditional hot dog concession. Winchendon Winds held a rehearsal inside the church sanctuary during the afternoon, and some visitors were drawn inside the open sanctuary doors by the exciting chords of John Williams’ “Star Wars” score.

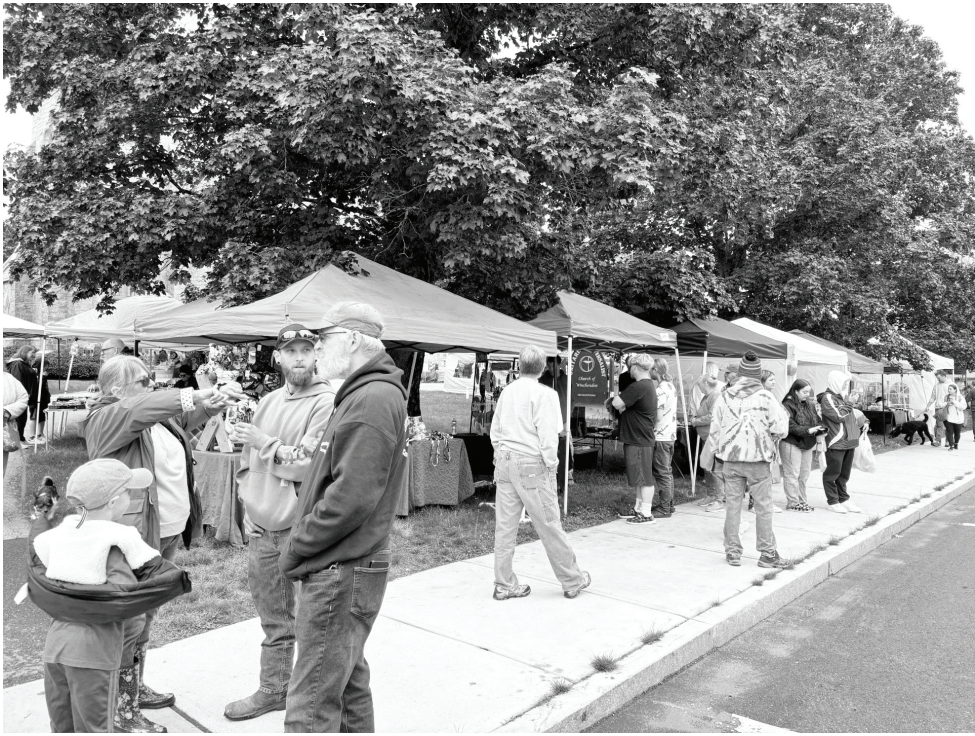
The Strawberry Festival was busy. Its ticketed BBQ dinner on Friday night pre-sold 300 tickets, and the church’s large outdoor tent kept attendees dry for food sales, raffle ticket sales and live music performances on Saturday.

The largest number of visitors strolled through all three locations between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m., a slightly later peak to the “traffic pattern” than the usual year. Most of the vendors at UUCW’s Lawn Fair stayed open an hour past the posted end time of 2:00 p.m. because it was still very busy.

New traditions like Founders Day are welcome, but Winchendon loves its tried and true old favorites, as well. Thanks to all the residents and visitors who grabbed an umbrella or rain cape and defied the showers to support their town, and many, many thanks to the Clark YMCA, Athol Savings Bank, UUCW, IMH Church, and all the sponsors and volunteers who work together to make it all happen.



The Winchendon CAC and Winchendon Kiwanis cooking and selling tasty food at the Clark
Photo copyright Winchendon CAC



Cool, damp weather didn’t hold back the shoppers
Photo by Jill Nicholson Sackett



Dave and Lucas Faucher staff the UU Church hot dog bar
Photo by Jill Nicholson Sackett



IMH’s Strawberry festival goes on under the “big tent”
Photo copyright Immaculate Heart of Mary Church

The August print edition of The Winchendon Courier will go to press on Tuesday, July 29 at noon.
Content for that edition must be received by the publisher before Sunday, July 27.