

# For The Record...

## WSYSA wreath sale Dec. 12

The West Springfield Youth Sports Association will be holding a wreath sale this Saturday, Dec. 12, at Santa's House, Mittineague Park.

The sale will run from 11 a.m.- 5 p.m., with Santa Claus arriving at 2 p.m. The wreaths are \$20, and each comes with a red or burgundy bow.

For the past thirty years, W.S.Y.S.A. has been working to ensure that West Side youth have the equipment they need to participate in their chosen sports. This cause benefits from the many fundraisers that the group sponsors throughout the year.

## CARE Coalition needs your help

The West Springfield CARE Coalition has formed several work groups to increase community involvement in the Coalition and to build momentum in carrying out its mission of providing education, prevention and intervention efforts to address and reduce underage alcohol and substance abuse.

The Coalition is in need of additional volunteers to commit time and energy to the following work groups:

- **Interview/focus** - group members will be given guidance and questions to conduct interviews and focus groups for the purposes of obtaining data from which CARE can plan appropriate evidence-based strategies;
- **Data team** - review and analyze the data obtained from surveys, interviews and focus groups in order to triangulate this information for presentation to the steering committee;
- **Strategic planning** - look at the data and priorities set by the steering committee and research and build evidence-based strategies to present to the steering committee;
- **Fundraising** - research fundraising opportunities and actively raise funds for CARE;
- **Volunteer team** - represent CARE at local events such as manning a table or marching in a parade to spread the CARE message, as well as other opportunities that arise; and,
- **Media group** - promote the CARE message via all media outlets, especially targeting electronic media (ideas include a YouTube channel, creation of Public Service Announcements, Channel 15)

Anyone interested in volunteering on a work group is asked to provide the following information to Erin Mountain (mountain@wsps.org or 263-3290): name,

email address, phone number, name of work group(s) you wish to join. Volunteers will be contacted by the work group chair person.

## County officials seek money for increased drug treatment

In related news, Hampden County Sheriff Michael J. Ashe Jr. says the sheriff's department is eager to see a grant proposal approved that would help in the effort to create a comprehensive diversion and treatment program for drug-involved offenders.

If his office can win the grant from the state Executive Office of Public Safety, the program would be called the "Hampden County Opioid and Heroin Crime Reduction Program," and its aim would be reducing incarceration for addiction, while enhancing treatment options and services, expanding recovery bed space for addicted individuals, and guarding public safety.

The case managers for this program would establish and maintain contacts with community agencies to assist participants with all aspects of recovery and reintegration into the community. Other agencies involved in the program, should the \$250,000 in grant money be awarded, include the District Attorney's Office, the Hampden County Day Reporting Center, Probation, the Office of Community Corrections, the Committee for Public Counsel Services, and a local detox recovery bed provider.

"This dynamic seamless new community team brings together the players, if you will, from criminal justice and treatment," Mr. Ashe said in a release. "As many are aware, I'm a great believer in the idea that 'it takes a village' to help an offender build a positive, productive law-abiding community life. That's why my department has built over 300 community partnerships over the years, and that's why we threw ourselves into helping to put together this dynamic new partnership."

## Mittineague trail maintenance

The Conservation Commission last week approved the Park and Recreation Department's plan to conduct routine maintenance along the interpretive trail in Mittineague Park with the help of the West Springfield Environmental Committee.

Park and Recreation Director Victoria Connor said the work will include brush cutting along sections of

the roughly 2.2-mile trail and the removal and replacement of rotting posts on the trail's interpretive stations. The commission found that the work is not subject to regulation under the Wetlands Protection Act.

However, there is also a need to replace bog bridges (a series of connected, plank-style walkways) at six wetlands crossings. That work would be done separately and may require the filing of a Notice of Intent with the Conservation Commission and the state Department of Environmental Protection, according to Mark Noonan, the town's conservation officer and senior planner. He said the deteriorating bridges pose a safety hazard for trail walkers, and avoidance of those walkways is affecting the surrounding wetlands.

The wet conditions at the six crossings are the result of "seasonal muck" exacerbated by stormwater runoff, said Dietrich Schlobohm and Todd Steglinski, both members of the Environmental Committee, a private organization that aims to promote and protect the ecological health of Mittineague and the Bear Hole watershed. One area off Fife Lane sees significant water flow in the spring; another spot is wet year-round.

"It's not a gushing stream," Mr. Steglinski said of the latter. "There is a continuous trickle of water with a grade difference."

Mr. Noonan added, "There may be areas that are wet but are not wetlands."

Responding to a recommendation from Mr. Noonan, the Conservation Commission voted to approve an appropriation not to exceed \$4,000 from the town's wetlands fees revolving account to hire a consultant to help identify materials or methods that would minimize the affect on the natural habitat at trail crossings. Mr. Noonan said he has reached out to the Appalachian Mountain Club, Mass Audubon and Paul Jahnige, director of greenways and trails for the state Department of Conservation and Recreation.

In other business, the commission continued its discussion of the Connecticut River bike trail Notice of Intent. The board is awaiting comment from the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program on how to protect any threatened wildlife or plants along the river. — *by Rich Wirth.*

## Next week's meetings

All meetings at J. Edward Christian Municipal Office Building, 26 Central St. (**Note:** Check the meeting board outside town hall for cancellations or rescheduled meetings.)

**Monday,** Park & Recreation Commission, 7 p.m., department office, 2nd floor.

**Tuesday,** License Commission, 4:30 p.m. mayor's meeting room, 2nd floor; Conservation Commission, 6 p.m., Merrick meeting room, 1st floor; Arts Council, 6:30 p.m., Tatham meeting room, 2nd floor.

**Wednesday,** Board of Health, 5 p.m. Merrick meeting room; Planning Board, 7 p.m., auditorium, 2nd floor.

*Compiled by Jack Farrell from press releases, interviews, town documents and other sources.*

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