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(734) 675-4000

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(Building Department/Economic Development)
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Assessing Office
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From the SUPERVISOR

Dear Brownstown Residents,

As the days grow shorter and the crisp autumn weather turns to winter, it's a wonderful time to slow down, reflect on the past year and appreciate all we have to be thankful for.

There's something special about Brownstown during the holiday season. From neighborhoods glowing with festive lights to families enjoying our annual holiday traditions and residents supporting local businesses, it's a time of year that brings out the best in our community.



What I'm most grateful for, however, is the way our residents look out for one another. Whether it's helping a neighbor shovel a driveway, volunteering to help families in need or simply showing someone a little kindness, these thoughtful gestures make a meaningful difference. It's this caring spirit that makes me so proud to call Brownstown home.

As we look back on 2026, I want to thank our residents, businesses, volunteers, Township Board, and dedicated employees for all they do throughout the year. Our community is strongest when we work together, and the involvement, ideas and support of our residents are just as important to Brownstown's success as the work we do here at the Township. I'm proud of what we've accomplished together and excited for what lies ahead as Brownstown celebrates its 200th anniversary in 2027!

From my family to yours, wishing you a wonderful holiday season and a happy, healthy New Year!

Sherry Berecz
Township Supervisor

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- Winter tax bills are mailed on December 1 and due by February 16.
- Please note that taxes are billed for the fiscal year ahead, not for the previous year. If you recently purchased a home and paid an amount toward the taxes in your closing costs, you may have paid a prorated amount toward the previous tax year. In most cases, bills issued after the closing date are not covered in your closing costs. Please read your paperwork carefully.



You may make payments over the phone by calling the number below. Please follow the prompts to complete your payment.

(734) 365-7766

Late Payment:

- A 3 percent penalty/late fee is applied on any payment received after 5:00 p.m. on either September 14 (summer tax) or February 16 (winter tax).
- On March 2, all delinquent real property is transferred to the Wayne County Treasurer and must then be paid either on their website at www.waynecounty.com/treasurer, by phone (313) 224-5990 or in person at 400 Monroe, 5th Floor, Detroit, MI 48226.

How to Pay your Tax Bill:

- **Mail ▶** Return the bottom portion of the tax bill with your check/money order made payable to: Brownstown Township. Post-dated checks will not be accepted, please date your check for the actual day you write it. Postmarks are not proof of receipt of payment. Payment will be recorded on the date received in our office, not the day it was mailed or the date on the envelope and/or check.
- **Drop Box ▶** Leave the bottom portion of your tax bill along with your check or money order (no cash) in the secure drive-up, locked drop box located on the sidewalk in front of the main entrance of Township Hall. It can be utilized 24 hours a day, and is under 24/7 video surveillance to ensure accuracy and safety.
- **Credit/Debit Card ▶** We accept Visa, MasterCard, American Express and Discover. For Water or Miscellaneous invoices, the fee is 2.95%; and for Tax bills it is 2.80%. ACH transactions from $0-$1,000 are $3/transaction, $1,001-$5,000 are $6.00/transaction and $5,001+ are $12/transaction.

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Deputy Treasurer: Victoria Taplin
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www.brownstownmi.gov

- **In Person ▶** Please bring your entire tax bill with you so we can date stamp the top portion for your records.
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- **Partial Payments ▶** We now accept partial payments.
- **Escrow/Mortgage Company ▶** If your taxes are paid through an escrow or mortgage company, you will not receive a tax bill. However, if you do, please forward it to your mortgage company.
- **Income Tax Info ▶** Please keep a copy of your tax bill for Income Tax purposes. Brownstown cannot advise you on what to claim. All income tax questions must be directed to a professional or to the State of Michigan.

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- A 3 percent penalty/late fee is applied on any payment received after 5:00 p.m. on either September 14 (summer tax) or February 16 (winter tax).

Senior Property Tax Deferments:

- Brownstown Treasurers Office July 14, 2005 Public Act 24 of 2005 has amended Section 51 of the Michigan General Property Tax Act (MCL 211.51) to allow the following residents: Senior Citizens (age 62 and older), Paraplegic or Quadriplegic, Eligible Serviceperson, Eligible Veteran, Eligible Widow or Widower, Blind



Person or Totally and Permanently Disabled person, to defer their summer property taxes if they have a household income below $40,000. To qualify for the deferment under the new income limit, a resident must meet one or more of the following conditions as defined by the State Income Tax Act:

- Household income below $40,000 for the current year
- Is 62 years of age or older, including the unmarried surviving spouse of a person who was 62 years of age or older at the time of death
- Is a paraplegic, quadriplegic, eligible serviceperson, eligible veteran, eligible widow or widower, blind person or a totally and permanently disabled person
- Residents who believe they qualify under the new limit and wish to defer their summer property taxes can obtain an Application for Deferment of Summer Taxes from the Brownstown Treasurers Office. Deferment forms must be on file with the Brownstown Treasurers Office no later than September 14. If the deferment is approved, individuals will have until February 16 to pay their summer property tax without penalty. You may obtain a form on our website.

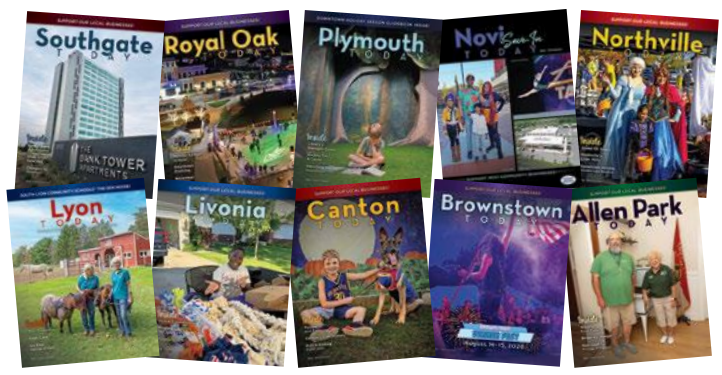
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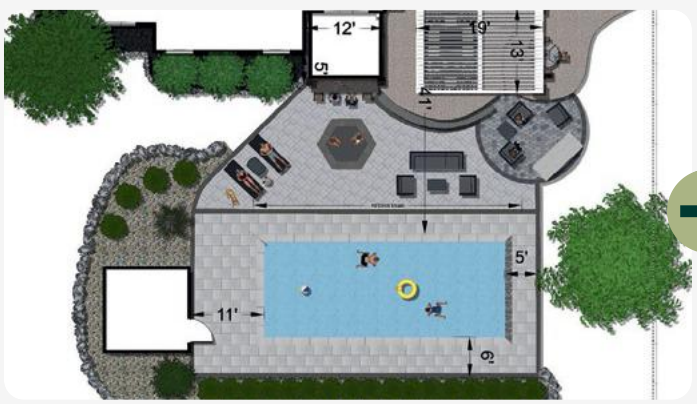
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I can't see well enough to do my crossword puzzles – Can You Help?

Ask the Doctor

Q: My doctor said I have moderate macular degeneration and diabetic retina damage, which feels pretty severe to me. I'm writing because it is almost impossible for me to do my crosswords even though I use large print puzzles and a magnifying glass. Having to hold my magnifier with one hand and trying to write has me so frustrated! What can you do to help me return to doing my crosswords?

~Carl N., 78 years old

A: To begin, it is encouraging to at least hear that your retinal doctor believes you have moderate tissue condition. You need to understand there is a difference between the amount of tissue damage compared to the impact on your ability to see and function.

There are three key steps that are required when someone needs help to see and write at the same time:

1) Proper magnification
2) A comfortable distance to work that allows you to write (not as close as you are used to)
3) The free use of your hands

In order to provide you with the best vision and ability to function in this situation, I prescribe special telescopic glasses. It is also important that you have the right lighting.

Having helped thousands of others over the decades who have had vision loss similar to you tells me that there are other areas of your life that can also be helped by improving your ability to function. It is helpful if you can identify other areas of your daily life in which your vision limits your ability to function.

It would be best if you could schedule an evaluation and bring the materials that you would like to see better when you come for your appointment.

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NUTS & SEEDS

Tiny But Potent Flavors for Fall

By Lisa Howard

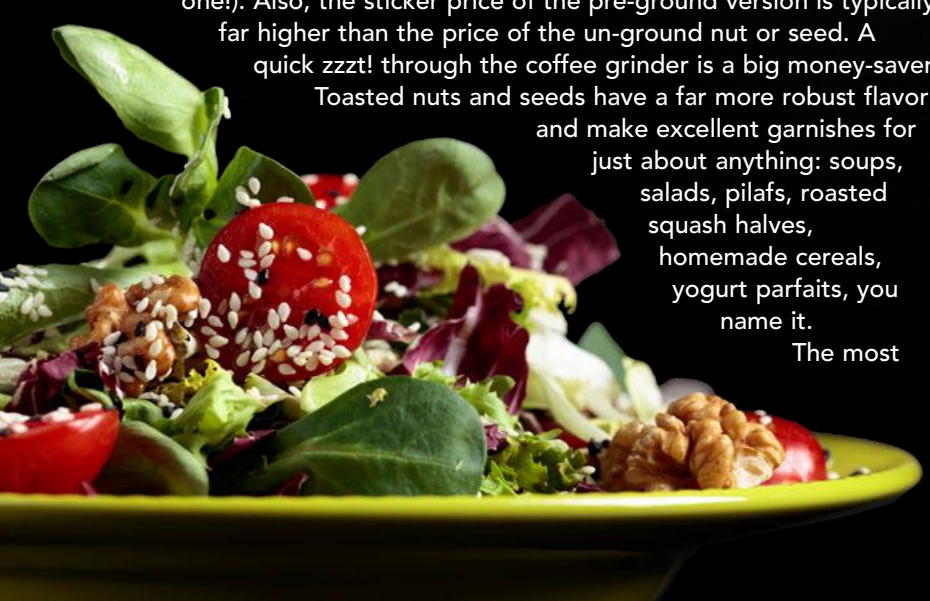
FAVORITE fall dishes have many perks, among them that their key ingredients tend to be easy and inexpensive to prepare: hearty greens take well to long simmers, chicken thighs with the bones and skin create their own broth, brown rice pilafs are an excellent way to use leftover veggies in the fridge.

No matter which dishes are on the menu, nuts and seeds are the perfect way to add even more flavor and texture! A little goes a long way, and as long as you store your nuts and seeds in the fridge (or even freezer), those can be inexpensive pantry items since they'll stay fresh that way.

Raw nuts and seeds taste more subtle than their toasted counterparts, and many can be ground in a regular coffee grinder to create fresh flour to be used in a wide variety of baked goods, from pumpkin bread to DIY crackers. (Technically, the coarser-than-flour result is a meal, but you can swap it out for a quarter of the flour called for in most recipes, or you can find recipes based on nut and seed meals.)

Candidates for the coffee grinder are: flax seeds, chia seeds, sunflower seeds, sesame seeds, pepitas, rolled oats, sliced almonds, chopped pecans and chopped walnuts. Larger, harder nuts can be ground in a flour mill or a very sturdy food processor.

Two bonuses of grinding your own nuts and seeds are that they're maximally fresh – they haven't been sitting pre-ground on a grocery shelf with their delicate inner fats exposed to light – and they're less costly because you can use them as nuts or meal (two for the price of one!). Also, the sticker price of the pre-ground version is typically far higher than the price of the un-ground nut or seed. A quick zzzt! through the coffee grinder is a big money-saver.



Toasted nuts and seeds have a far more robust flavor and make excellent garnishes for just about anything: soups, salads, pilafs, roasted squash halves, homemade cereals, yogurt parfaits, you name it.

The most foolproof way to toast them is to scatter them onto a skillet over medium-low heat in a single layer. No need to add oil – just let them toast, stirring them or shaking the skillet occasionally, for 5 to 8 minutes or until they smell delightfully toasty. (Smaller pieces will toast more quickly than larger pieces.)

Do not leave nuts or seeds unattended! They go from perfectly toasted to burnt slag surprisingly quickly. Have a cool plate ready and just slide them onto the plate as soon as they're aromatic and darkening.

In addition to a big kick of flavor, certain nuts and seeds offer outsized nutritional oomph. Walnuts, chia seeds and flax seeds, in particular, have high levels of anti-inflammatory omega-3 fats, making them especially welcome toppers for a wide range of dishes. Chia and flax both have mucilaginous qualities, too, meaning that they'll thicken any liquid they're stirred into. (To make a no-cook pudding, stir chia seeds into coconut milk or half-and-half along with a splash of maple syrup and a few drops of vanilla and let sit for about 5 minutes.)

Of course, all nuts and seeds are an excellent source of fiber. So this fall, go nuts! And don't forget the seeds.



Lisa Howard is a writer, editor and health educator who loves to share her joy of cooking delicious and nutritious foods during her community talks and culinary classes. You can find out more about her classes and recipes at www.theculturedcook.com.

WBSD *Celebrates* School Improvements

as Wegienka Elementary Hosts Ribbon Cutting



Brownstown Supervisor Sherry Berecz, Trustee Roger Jones, Treasurer Michael Eberth.



Wegienka Media Teacher Kristina Miller with WBSD BOE Secretary Rob Harris.



WBSD BOE Trustees Mitch Dobek and Bridget Thorning get a tour of the school with students and parent.

The Woodhaven-Brownstown School District is continuing to celebrate the transformation of its elementary schools through the voter-approved 2021 Bond Program, with Wegienka Elementary School hosting a ribbon-cutting ceremony Tuesday evening, October 27, to showcase its extensive renovations and improvements.

The celebration follows September ribbon-cutting ceremonies at Bates and Gudith elementary schools, where students, families, staff members, community leaders and district representatives gathered to see firsthand how bond-funded projects are creating modernized learning environments throughout the district.

At Wegienka, improvements have touched nearly every aspect of the school, from refreshed classrooms and renovated common areas to enhanced outdoor spaces. The projects were designed to create welcoming, functional environments that support student learning, creativity and collaboration.

Wegienka Elementary: A Fresh Look and New Learning Opportunities

Among the most significant improvements at Wegienka is the transformation of the school's Learning Commons into a modern, inviting space for students to read, collaborate and explore. Unique design elements, including harvested real trees, bring a natural feel to the space and create an engaging environment for learning.

The media center also received new furniture and skylights, introducing additional natural light into the space.

Throughout the building, new flooring and fresh paint provide an updated look, while the cafeteria has been completely renovated with new furniture and updated finishes. The gymnasium also received renovations, further improving the school's spaces for physical education and school activities.

Students also benefit from a new SMART Lab, which provides opportunities for hands-on exploration, problem-solving, creativity and STEM-based learning.

Outside, a new parking lot and walking path improve accessibility and pedestrian circulation while enhancing the overall appearance of the school grounds.

"There is something special about opening the doors to a learning environment designed with students in mind," said Superintendent Matthew Salah. "Our goal is to ensure that every child who walks into Wegienka feels welcomed, supported and excited to learn. This project reflects our commitment to providing our students with the opportunities and environments they deserve."

Together, these improvements provide Wegienka students and staff with updated spaces designed to support learning and the school community for years to come.

"Great things happen when a community comes together with a shared belief in the power of education," said Wegienka Elementary School Principal Michelle Briegel. "Thank you to our wonderful community for supporting our students, our school and the future of our Wildcats. We are so grateful to be part of a community that believes in making great things happen for kids!"

Building Better Learning Environments at Bates and Gudith

Wegienka's improvements build on the transformations recently celebrated at Bates and Gudith elementary schools, where bond-funded projects have introduced new learning spaces, modernized facilities and enhanced campus features.

At Bates Elementary, a new front office addition provides a more secure entrance for visitors and an improved space to welcome students and families. The school also gained dedicated art and music rooms, a new SMART Lab and an updated Learning Commons.

Classrooms received fresh paint and new flooring, while cafeteria improvements included new flooring, fresh paint and refrigeration equipment. Exterior upgrades included new doors, improved parking lots, a new outdoor play pad and a walking path.

At Gudith Elementary, the project included a four-classroom addition designed for young fives and kindergarten students, providing updated learning spaces for the district's youngest learners.

The school also received a new SMART Lab and a renovated Learning Commons, while classrooms throughout the building were updated with new paint and carpeting. Additional improvements included a transformed cafeteria and kitchen serving area, a completely renovated Special Services wing with new furniture, a new parking lot, a basketball court, new exterior classroom doors and a gathering area for parents and families.

Although each school's project reflects its individual needs, the improvements share a common goal: providing students and staff with safe, welcoming and engaging spaces that support teaching and learning.

Investing in the Future

The improvements at Bates, Gudith and Wegienka represent the Woodhaven-Brownstown School District's continued investment in its schools and the communities they serve.

The work is not finished. Construction projects are currently underway at Erving and Yake elementary schools, with improvements expected to continue through 2027. These ongoing projects are part of the district's broader effort to modernize school facilities and provide students and staff with welcoming, functional learning environments.

Made possible through the community's support of the 2021 Bond Program, these investments are creating opportunities for students to learn, collaborate, discover and grow while ensuring school facilities continue to serve the needs of future generations.

The district extends its appreciation to the Woodhaven-Brownstown Board of Education, community members, staff, construction partners and everyone who contributed to bringing these improvements to life.

Ultimately, the success of these projects will be measured not only by the renovated spaces but by the students who fill them with curiosity, creativity and excitement for learning.

Through these investments, WBSD continues its commitment to its mission to Engage, Enlighten and Empower students while building learning environments that will serve generations of Warriors to come.



Representatives from McCarthy Smith, who was the construction company on the project.



Bates Ribbon Cutting.



Gudith Ribbon Cutting.



EMPOWERING STUDENT VOICES

WBSD welcomes new Board of Education student representatives

The Woodhaven-Brownstown School District is taking a meaningful step forward in fostering civic engagement and student leadership by welcoming two dynamic student leaders to the Board of Education for the 2026–2027 school year: Mataeya Guerra and Lilly Diaz.

The Student Representative program provides a unique opportunity for high schoolers to actively participate in public education governance. Selected through a rigorous application and interview process, Guerra and Diaz will attend designated Board meetings, offer crucial insights from the student perspective, and serve as a vital communication bridge between their peers and district leadership.

"Our students are at the center of every decision we make, and creating opportunities for their voices to be heard is an important part of our commitment to continuous improvement," said Superintendent Matthew Salah. "We are excited to welcome our student representatives to the Board of Education and look forward to the perspectives, ideas and experiences they will bring to our conversations."

Both representatives bring impressive records of school involvement, academic excellence and community leadership to their new roles.

A known leader within the halls of Woodhaven High School, Guerra serves as the National Honor Society (NHS) president, a WHS tribe leader, and a Student Council representative, all while participating in sideline and competitive cheer. Her motivation to step up as a student representative stems from her deep belief in equitable advocacy and a curiosity about the inner workings of district governance.

"This appointment to be BOE student representative is such an amazing opportunity that I am grateful to be a part of," Guerra said. "And I feel honored to be able to share parts of the student experience to the board, and also learn more about what happens beyond the scenes. I am so excited to help amplify Woodhaven students' voices to our board and act as a representative for the body."



Lilly Diaz and Mataeya Guerra with Superintendent Matthew Salah.


Lilly Diaz and Mataeya Guerra with the Board of Education.

Diaz is a standout tri-sport athlete – competing in varsity track, cross country and basketball – who also dedicates her time to NHS and Link Crew, helping welcome and mentor incoming students. Driven by a desire to strengthen the school environment, she looks forward to sharpening her leadership skills while bringing fresh student ideas directly to board discussions.

"I'm really excited for this opportunity and grateful to be a student representative to the Board of Education," Diaz said. "I'm looking forward to sharing the student perspective and being able to help make sure students' voices are heard."

By embedding student voices into official discussions, the WBSD Board of Education reinforces its commitment to transparent, community-centered decision-making. With Guerra and Diaz at the table, the district ensures that the future of its schools is guided by the very students who walk its hallways every day.



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Make Your Holiday Gatherings Local

IN BROWNSTOWN TOWNSHIP

THE holiday season is quickly approaching, bringing opportunities to gather with family, celebrate with friends and recognize coworkers for another year of hard work. Whether you're planning an office holiday party, hosting a family get-together or organizing a festive meal with friends, Brownstown Township businesses offer options to help make your celebrations a little easier.

Several local establishments offer event spaces and catering menus to help bring everyone together.

Looking for a Place to Host Your Celebration?



Big Bear Lodge

Bring the cozy, Up North atmosphere to your next holiday gathering at Big Bear Lodge. The restaurant offers three semi-private dining rooms, customizable event menus, full bar service, and in-house cake options. With spaces accommodating groups of different sizes, it's an option for family celebrations, workplace gatherings and holiday parties. For event details and room availability, call (734) 782-6600 or visit Big Bear Lodge's event page.

Champions Sports Grill



Planning a casual, lively holiday party? Champions Sports Grill offers a private banquet room for gatherings with family, friends and coworkers. With a sports-grill atmosphere and food and beverage options, it's worth considering for your next group celebration. For information about room reservations and event arrangements, call (734) 284-7000 or visit Champions' private event page.

Baldo's Restaurant



Baldo's Restaurant offers both banquet accommodations and catering, making it a convenient option whether you want to host your gathering at the restaurant or serve a meal at another location. Its menu features Italian favorites and other crowd-pleasing options suitable for family celebrations and workplace events. To discuss banquet arrangements or catering orders, call (734) 479-0100 or visit Baldo's banquet and catering page.

Hosting at Home or at the Office? Let a Local Business Help with the Food.

The Market

Take some of the work out of holiday meal planning with catering from The Market. Options include meat and cheese trays, fruit platters, chicken tenders,





party subs, and other selections for gatherings of various sizes. The Market also offers larger meal options for events and group celebrations. For catering menus, ordering information and questions about lead times, call (734) 479-1240 or visit The Market's catering page.



Princess Mediterranean Grill

Add something different to your holiday spread with Mediterranean catering from Princess Mediterranean Grill. Its catering options include food trays, boxed lunches, sandwiches, wraps, and customizable menus for family gatherings and workplace events. Pickup, delivery, staffing, and event setup options are also available. For catering questions, customized menus or ordering details, call (734) 672-7768 or visit Princess Mediterranean Grill's Brownstown catering page. The restaurant requests at least 24 hours' notice for catering orders.





Supporting local businesses during the holiday season is a meaningful way to invest in our community while making time to enjoy the people who matter most. Whether you choose a local venue for your celebration or order catering to serve at home, consider keeping your holiday plans close to home this year.

Plan ahead! The holiday season is a busy time for restaurants and caterers, so contact businesses early to discuss availability, menus, pricing, and any ordering deadlines.

Valentines Music Bingo

February 5, 2027

Save the date and join the Brownstown DDA and the Woodhaven Brownstown Rotary for their annual Valentines Music Bingo. Grab your gals or partner and enjoy a night of food, drinks, and love heartbreak songs!

Brownstown Event Center

More details to follow on Facebook at Woodhaven Brownstown Rotary. Tickets for purchase on Zeffy.

Questions?
Call (734) 675-5933

BROWNSTOWN DDA
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Woodhaven Brownstown Rotary











2027 DDA Events

February
Valentines Bingo

March
Paint and Sip

April
Charity Shred Day
Proclamation Day

May
Business Expo and Taste Tour
Bicentennial Celebration
Thriving Together Action Day

June
The Music and Market Series
Touch a Truck
Local Market

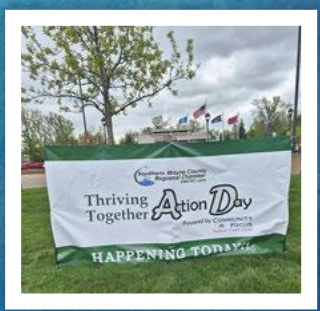
July
The Music and Market Series
Local Market

August
Summerfest
The Music and Market Series
Local Market

October
Buy Nearby Weekend

November
Small Business Saturday
Fall Art Market

December
Speed Networking Event



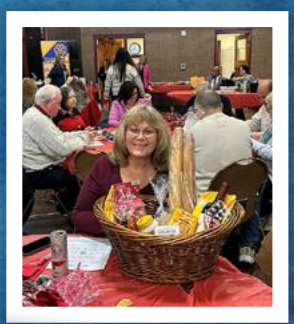






For exact dates, times and locations follow us on Facebook at Charter Township of Brownstown Downtown Development Authority.

Questions? Email mbujauskas@brownstownmi.gov.





BROWNSTOWN DDA
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY







HOLIDAY-READY SAVINGS!

CARPET CLEANING SPECIAL OFFER

$159 3 Rooms + Hall
In-Home Carpet Cleaning

Must present coupon. Up to 250 sq. ft. each room plus one hall; no substitutions. Some restrictions apply. Not to be combined with any other coupons/offers. **Expires 12/31/26**

Brownstown & Woodhaven SATURDAY SPECIAL OFFER

25% OFF Rug Cleaning Pick-Up & Delivery Service
Saturday Appointments Only

Only valid on Saturday Pick-Up & Delivery. Must present coupon at time of pick up. Some restrictions apply. Not to be combined with any other coupons/offers. **Expires 12/31/26**

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SMALL BUSINESS WEEKEND SWEEPSTAKES by the DDA

THE holiday season is here, and with it comes the excitement of holiday shopping! As you begin checking names off your gift list, consider shopping locally and supporting the small businesses that make our community special.

Small Business Saturday takes place each year on the Saturday after Thanksgiving, encouraging shoppers to support small, locally owned businesses in their communities. Established by American Express in 2010 and recognized by the U.S. Small Business Administration, this annual tradition highlights the important role small businesses play in creating jobs, strengthening local economies and building vibrant communities.



When you shop small, your dollars help support local business owners, their employees and the services and experiences that make Brownstown Township unique. From finding one-of-a-kind gifts to discovering a new favorite shop, shopping locally is a meaningful way to give back to your community during the holiday season and throughout the year.

For the second year in a row, the Brownstown Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is celebrating Small Business Saturday with its Small Business Weekend Selfie Sweepstakes! Shoppers are encouraged to visit participating local businesses, snap a photo and enter for a chance to win a gift card from a local Brownstown business.

Want to participate? Visit the Brownstown DDA Facebook page for sweepstakes details, entry instructions and updates. This Small Business Saturday, make a difference with your holiday shopping by choosing local and showing your support for the businesses that help our community thrive.

BROWNSTOWN DDA
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Celebrating Local Business Milestones

IN BROWNSTOWN TOWNSHIP

THE Brownstown Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is proud to celebrate the businesses that contribute to our community's continued growth. Recently, the DDA recognized two business milestones with ribbon-cutting ceremonies: the reopening of Arnold's Place following a complete restaurant renovation and the expansion of Kerry Brothers Truck Repair into Brownstown Township.

Kerry Brothers Truck Repair Celebrates Ribbon Cutting



On August 26, 2026, the DDA celebrated Kerry Brothers Truck Repair with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. A family-owned business serving the Metro Detroit area since 1985, Kerry Brothers specializes in commercial vehicle services, including truck repairs, preventive maintenance, fleet services and roadside assistance.



Its Brownstown location expands access to these essential services for local businesses and fleet operators. The company's growth into Brownstown follows its acquisition of Downriver Bus & Truck Repair, building on its longstanding experience in the commercial vehicle industry.



Arnold's Place Reopens Following Complete Renovation

On August 31, 2026, the DDA celebrated the reopening of Arnold's Place following a complete renovation of the restaurant. The renovations gave the diner a fresh, new look while allowing it to continue welcoming customers to enjoy its menu of breakfast favorites, classic comfort food and diner staples. This exciting milestone represents a renewed investment in a local dining destination and provides residents with another opportunity to support Brownstown's restaurant community.



These ribbon cuttings highlight the variety of businesses that strengthen Brownstown Township's economy, from local dining destinations to specialized service providers. The DDA congratulates both businesses on their milestones and looks forward to celebrating their continued growth and success in the community.



Home FOR THE Holidays!

SALE EVENT

November 19 - December 11

PLUS SPECIAL FINANCING AVAILABLE!*

**Ask a sale associate for details.

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BROWNSTOWN TOWNSHIP

Parks and Recreation



























ATTENTION!

Beginning January 2027 Brownstown Parks and Recreation will be going cashless for all transactions.

No cash or checks will be taken. Please use a credit/debit card.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Home Holiday Decorating Award

Sponsored by the Beautification/Historical Commission

Attention Brownstown residents! Do you or someone in your neighborhood go "all out" for holiday decorating? The Beautification/Historical Commission would love you to nominate them. For this year's contest, the Commission will provide the winner signs for display. Please email your address for nomination to matthewww@brownstownmi.gov by December 10 to participate. Winners will receive a specially made yard sign, a Home Depot gift card and be featured on the Recreation Department's Facebook page.

Kids, Drop Your Letters in Santa's Mailbox!

Sponsored by Downriver-West Kiwanis

Santa's Mailbox is located outside of the Brownstown Event Center from November 16-December 14! Children are invited to drop off their letters to Santa – just make sure to include their name and return address so Santa knows where to send his reply!

Brownstown Tree Lighting

Thursday, December 3, 6-8 p.m. Free

Location: Brownstown Event Center, 23345 King Road

Santa arrives at 6 p.m. sharp via a fire engine, with the Woodhaven High School Marching Band leading the way to the tree!

Join us for inside and outside activities!

*Food trucks *DJ from TJ Monte Productions *Outdoor heaters *Smores with Brownstown firefighters *Crafts *Ice Carvings *Balloon twisters *Reindeer *The Grinch *Santa and more!

Don't forget to bring a toy for Goodfellows, "No child without a Christmas!"

Carriage Rides and Cocoa

Friday, December 11, 6-8 p.m.

Fee: $5 per person – all attending this event must pay. Advance payment required. Fee includes carriage ride (rides are not exclusive), cocoa and treats. Registration began November 2 at 8 a.m. You will be given a specific time frame for your carriage ride prior to event.

Enjoy a brisk winter carriage ride, cocoa, treats and holiday fun at the Brownstown Event Center and trails, located at 23345 King Road.

Santa Breakfast

Saturday, December 12, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.
Location: Brownstown Event Center, 23345 King Road
Fee: $20

Pancake breakfast, magic show and a visit with Santa! Tickets must be bought in advance through the Recreation Department. Ages 2 and up must register.

Sensory Friendly Visit with Santa!

Cookie decorating provided by Elliott's Bakery and Coffee Shop
Saturday, December 12, 1-3 p.m. Free/drop-in
A special day for individuals with neuro-diversities and their families/caretakers.
Location: Brownstown Event Center, 23345 King Road

Families will enjoy snacks and craft activities while they wait for their special time to meet with Santa. Santa will also make rounds for those who don't want to come up to his chair.

Goodfellows "No child without a Christmas" Toy collection

The Brownstown Event Center, 23345 King Road, will be a drop-off location for new/unwrapped toys for Brownstown Goodfellows' "No Child without a Christmas". Please bring your new unwrapped toy to the drop-off box located in the Event Center no later than Friday, December 11. Drop-offs are also located at Township Hall and Brownstown Police Department. These toys will be distributed by the Goodfellows to local children in need.

Do you know someone in need this holiday season? Brownstown Goodfellows will be taking applications for those families in need – call the Goodfellows line at (734) 675-1307 for a list of required documentation you will need to bring on sign-up day to receive assistance. Senior citizens in need of assistance this holiday season may also call the Goodfellows line for assistance.

Brownstown Community Gardens

Located near the Brownstown Historical Building off King Road or behind Brownstown Police station. Please call Parks and Recreation.

Plot renewals for 2027 are due by December 17, 2026.

Call after January 4, 2027, for new availability in spring 2027.

COMMUNITY CENTER RENOVATION UPDATE

The Brownstown Community Center is currently closed for renovations.

Hours: Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m.-6 p.m.
Brownstown Event Center, 23345 King Road

Need Information or Registration?
Call (734) 675-0920
Visit brownstownmi.gov to register online.

Our office staff will begin returning to the Community Center soon. Please check our Facebook page for the latest updates on when registration and programming will resume at the Community Center, located at 21311 Telegraph Road.

Check us out on FACEBOOK!

Family Dance – Once Upon a Time

Saturday, February 6, 6-8 p.m.
Location: Brownstown Community Center
Tickets: 18 per person (Adult/Child)
Tickets in advance only at Brownstown Community Center or online.

Pizza, dancing, treats and selfie photo booth!

Family Candy Bar BINGO! Shamrocks and Sweets for Shelter Animals

Saturday, March 13, 1 p.m.
Location: Brownstown Community Center, 21311 Telegraph Road

This is an all-ages event! Children need to be supervised by an adult 18 or older.

Entry fee is one candy bar per player and a donation to the animal shelter (treats or toys). No need to sign up ahead of time! Bingo will start at 1 p.m. at the Community Center. We will play until candy bars are gone (around two hours). Bingo prizes will be candy bars! Don't forget to wear your green in honor of St. Patrick's Day!



Parks & Rec *continued on page 24*

Parks and Recreation

continued from page 23

YOUTH PROGRAMS

Cashless Payments only – no cash or check

American Red Cross and Sensory Friendly Swim Lessons with Arbor Autism Centers will return in the spring. Sign up will begin in March 2027.

Tot Music Group with Brownstown Early-on TOTE

In partnership with Woodhaven Brownstown Schools

November 25; December 9; January 6,20; February 3,17; March 3,17; April 7,21; May 5,19;

June 2 – every other Wednesday 10-10:45 a.m.

Class is designed to promote language, motor, cognition, and social skills in infants and toddlers through music. Drop in Free.

Special Olympics – Young Athletes Program

In partnership with Woodhaven Brownstown Schools

December 2,16; January 13,27; February 10,24; March 10,24; April 14,28; May 12,26; June 9 – every other Wednesday 10-10:45 a.m.

This is an early childhood play program for children with and without intellectual disabilities, ages 2 to 4 years old. The Young Athletes Program will introduce basic sport skills, like running, kicking and throwing. Drop in free.

Young Rembrandts: Power of Drawing

This program is for those children who attend Wegienka

Grades 1-5

Thursday, January 21 – Thursday, March 11

8 weeks, $124



We're celebrating the new year in style with an exciting season of Young Rembrandts drawing lessons! Students will kick off the session by creating groovy giraffes, a detailed scorpion, and a delicious ice cream sundae. Each month, artists will also explore an inspiring art history lesson featuring influential Black women such as Claudette Colvin. Along the way, students will strengthen core drawing skills, boost self-confidence and develop their creativity. We can't wait to draw with you!



Karate with Progressive Tactics

Classes held at the Brownstown Event Center until further notice. Call for a free trial (313) 520-2057 or visit www.progressivetactics.com for more information. Registration takes place with the instructor at class.

There is a 20 percent discount on additional participating family members. Instructor Bill Barker.

- **Youth 7-12:** Monday and Wednesday, 6-6:55 p.m. $65 - 2 days a week
- **Little Dragon 5-6:** Monday, 6:05-6:45 p.m. $50 - 1 day a week
- **Little Tigers 3-4:** Monday, 5:30-6 p.m. $50 - 1 day a week
- **Adult 13+:** Monday and Wednesday, 7-7:55 p.m. $65/month - 2 days a week
- **Adult/Filipino Arts 13+:** Wednesday, 8-9:30 p.m. $50 - 1 day a week

Youth Basketball (grades 1-8)

Woodhaven Upper Elementary School

Register in November, leagues begin in January.

Register through Woodhaven Parks and Recreation at www.Woodhavenmi.org.

Jags Soccer-Spring 2027

Downriver Cubs: U4/U5

Downriver Juniors: 6-12 years

Location: Brownstown Soccer Fields, 23345 King Road, (Thorn Park at the corner of King and Telegraph)

Visit https://michiganjaguarsfc.com or email john.mcintyre@michiganjaguarsfc.com to register.

Brownstown/Taylor South Little League Baseball & Softball

Leagues for ages 4-16

Registration is going on now for spring 2027. Games begin in April. Please visit the Brownstown/Taylor South Little League Facebook page or email www.taylorsouthlittleleague@gmail.com for more information or to register.

ADULT PROGRAMS

Cashless Payments only – no cash or check

Cornhole League

18+ Coed
Thursdays, January 7-March 4, 2026, 7:30 p.m.
Location: Brownstown Community Center, 21311 Telegraph
Fee: $160 per team of two – due at signup

Easy Flow Yoga

Have fun while you learn the gentle postures (asanas) and restorative breathing techniques. Let this class help you to remove all the damaging effects of our stressful lives and improve your overall strength, balance and stamina. Wear comfortable, stretchy clothing and bring a mat, rug or blanket. Please refrain from eating an hour before class.
Ages 16+
Location:

Session 1 – 8 weeks (Dates subject to change)

- **Tuesdays, 6:15-7:15 p.m.**
  January 5-February 23
  Fee: $50 Instructor: Tracy
- **Thursdays, 6:15-7:15 p.m.**
  January 7-February 25
  Fee: $50 Instructor: Tracy

Session 2 – 8 weeks (Dates subject to change)

- **Tuesdays, 6:15-7:15 p.m.**
  March 2-April 20
  Fee: $50 Instructor: Tracy
- **Thursdays, 6:15-7:15 p.m.**
  March 4-April 22
  Fee: $50 Instructor: Tracy

Pilates

Enjoy learning gentle postures that help you concentrate on a full body workout with an emphasis on core strength. Ages 16+
Location:

Session 1 – 8 weeks (Dates subject to change)

- **Wednesdays, 6-7 p.m.**
  January 6-February 24
  Fee: $50 Instructor: Donna

Session 2 – 8 weeks (Dates subject to change)

- **Wednesdays, 6-7 p.m.**
  March 3-April 21
  Fee: $50 Instructor: Donna

Parks & Rec *continued on page 26*

FACILITY RENTALS

Call to check availability. Rentals require an agreement, deposit and must be made in person. All rentals will require cashless payment. No cash or checks will be taken for rentals. Recurring rentals are not permitted on a weekly basis. Rentals may not dominate the public space in lobby, hallways or outside of the building.

Brownstown Event Center

Located at 23345 King Road, the Event Center is an elegant location to hold showers, graduation parties or even weddings. During the in-season, a large outdoor area provides a beautiful space for wedding ceremonies. In the offseason, it provides a beautiful backdrop for any special occasion. Prep kitchen is included with the rental of the Event Center. Cooking is not permitted.

Currently taking reservations through December of 2027.

Rental reservations open for 2028 on Tuesday, January 4, 2027.

Brownstown Community Center

Located at 21311 Telegraph Road, the Brownstown Community Center has been a premier destination for special events Downriver for many years. The Community Center features six rooms available for individual or combination rental, providing flexible options for events of all sizes. A full-service kitchen is also available for rent to guests. A food-handling license must be presented for cooking onsite.

Whether you're planning a large wedding and need the entire facility or hosting a birthday party, shower, anniversary celebration, meeting, or other gathering in a single room, the Community Center offers affordable and flexible rental options to meet a variety of needs.

2027 reservations open Tuesday, December 8. Rental Reservations for 2028 will open Tuesday, January 4, 2027. Dates subject to change pending renovation progress.

Thorn Park Shelter Rental

Available for rent to Brownstown residents only. A $200 fee is required, with an additional $200 refundable deposit. Thorn Park shelter may be rented From Saturday, May through Sunday, October 3, 2027. Reservations for summer 2027 can be made starting Tuesday, April 6, 2027.

Alcohol is not permitted in the shelter or the park. Unregistered parties are not permitted. A grill is provided onsite for cooking. No other cooking devices are allowed in the park. Tables and chairs may not be brought into the park. Please see these rules along with others posted online and at Thorn Park Shelter before renting.

Parks and Recreation

continued from page 25

SENIOR PROGRAMS

All registration and programs held at the Brownstown Event Center. Call (734) 675-0920 for more information.

Senior Activities And Events

Brownstown and surrounding community residents 50 and over are welcome to participate in a wide variety of programs, events and trips. Check out our monthly calendar at www.brownstownmi.gov

SMART SENIOR Transportation

Residents of Brownstown can take advantage of the Senior Bus Transportation services through a SMART Specialized Services Grant. This service is available to residents who are disabled or residents over 60 years of age. The cost starts at $1 for shopping trips to Meijer, Kroger, Target, Aldi, Walmart, and Trentwood Market, or educational and social field trips.

To apply for the Transportation Program, complete an application and submit a copy of your Driver's License or State ID to the Brownstown Township Senior Coordinator or find it under the transportation tab of the website at brownstownmi.gov. If you need an application or current transportation calendar mailed to you, call Lindsey Fendt at (734) 415-3161 and provide your name, address and return phone number.

Senior Bus Transportation is currently providing a $3 roundtrip ride to a medical or dental appointment with a seven-day advance registration for appointments on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. Approved Senior Bus Transportation residents can call (734) 415-3161 to register for transportation with a seven-day notice prior to appointment time within our service area.

The Senior Nutrition Program

Sponsored by Wayne County Meals on Wheels, offering hot meals Monday through Thursday at 12:00 p.m. During our Community Center Renovation, Meals on Wheels and Congregate lunch will be meeting at the Event Center, 23345 King Road. There is a suggested donation of $4 per meal.

This is a delicious way to make friends! Meals on Wheels home delivery are also available Monday-Thursday for seniors who sign up. Please call Joanie (734) 675-5902 for more information or to sign up.

We are incredibly grateful for your dedication and commitment to serving our community through the Meals on Wheels Program!

Robin McGinnis and Elke Topjian – 10 Years of Service
Karen Gardner – 15 Years of Service

Thank you for the countless hours, compassion and kindness you have shared with our community. Your dedication makes a difference!

Check our website at www.brownstownmi.gov/senior_programs for dates and times for upcoming euchre, cards, and mahjong, at our newly renovated Community Center and Senior Lounge. Look for Lunch and Learn this year with topics like fall prevention, diabetes diets, technology assistance and more.

Monthly Activities

- **Travel Club –** First Monday of each month at 11 a.m., with three vendors presenting trips.
- **Pleasure Seekers Social Club –** Monthly meeting and birthday recognition with cake and ice cream followed by Bingo the first Thursday of each month at 1:00 p.m. The third Thursday of each month is a 1:00 p.m. potluck lunch followed by Bingo. Annual membership is $12. Accepting new members!
- **Brownstown Book Buffs Book Club –** Second Thursday of each month is from 10 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., with coffee and cookies. We meet at the Trenton Veterans Memorial Library during Community Center renovations.
- **Game Day –** Game Day meets the second Thursday of each month at 1 p.m. Enjoy a light lunch and beverages while you play board games and cards of your choice. Sign up in advance and pay $4 at Community Center or call (734) 675-0920 to register over the phone.
- **Breakfast Bingo –** Third Monday of every month at 9:00 a.m. Brownstown Firefighters cook pancakes and sausage. Sign up in advance for a $2 breakfast. Bingo is $3 and collected to play after breakfast.
- **Senior Evening Potluck –** Fourth Monday of the month at 4 p.m., starting January 2027. Sign up over the phone or in person at the Community Center with a $2 contribution toward the main dish and bring a dish to pass.
- **Feisty Red Hats Club –** Second Monday of each month. This group will resume meeting at Community Center when it re-opens. Meanwhile, they are hosting offsite events. If you are interested in going to lunch, plays, teas and more, check out the Feisty Red Hat Club. Currently expanding their membership.

Weekly Activities

- **Mahjong Mondays –** at 11a.m.
- **Beginner Line Dance** with Marion Baxter Tuesdays at 1 p.m. $2 for drop-in class. Great exercise and a fun way to meet people!
- **Senior Exercise Drop-In –** Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 10:00-11:00 a.m. Free. When the Community Center reopens, exercise will be Monday – Thursday from 10:00-11:00 a.m.

- **Senior Card Day –** Wednesdays at 11 a.m. for drop-in cards at the Senior Lounge in Community Center once it opens for the public.

In-House Special Events and Trips

December

- **Christmas Shopping at Franklin Park Mall**
  Date: Tuesday, December 1. Arrive at 10:30 a.m. for holiday shopping and lunch on your own.
  Fee: $10 in advance for bus departing from Brownstown clock tower. (734) 675-0920
- **Christmas Carols and Cookies**
  Seniors are entertained with a concert by the Woodhaven High School Choral groups, followed by cookie decorating and fellowship with the students.
  Date: Wednesday, December 2 at 12:00 p.m.
  Fee: Free
  Location: Event Center, 23345 King Road
- **Holiday Party – 'An Elf Christmas'**
  Date: Friday, December 11, 1 p.m.
  Fee: $15 in advance for lunch and gifting. Live music starts at 1 p.m.
  Location: Event Center 23345 King Road

January

- **Lunch and Learn –** Tuesday, January 5, 12 p.m. Cost and topic TBD
- **Winter Wonderland: lunch with music –** Friday, January 22, 1 p.m. $15, register in advance.

February

- **Lunch and Learn –** Tuesday, February 2, 12 p.m. Cost and topic TBD
- **Queen of Hearts: lunch and music –** Friday, February 19, 1 p.m. $15, register in advance.

March

- **Lunch and Learn –** Tuesday, March 2, 12 p.m. Cost and topic TBD
- **St. Patrick's Day Party –** Wednesday, March 17, 1 p.m. $15, register in advance.



Travel

Travel Opportunities with Bianco

- **Firekeepers Casino –** February 25, $60

Extended travel opportunities with Premier World Discoveries

Call (877) 953-8687 for more information. Please give the Brownstown Travel Club booking number to receive your Travel Club Discount.

- **Fantastic Florida and the Keys,** February 25 – March 4, 2027, $4,624 pp/dbl w/BD
  Group Booking # 221866
- **Burgundy and Provence French River Cruise,** May 11-19, 2027, starts at $5,819 pp/dbl w/BD*
  Group Booking # 221871
- **California Rail Discovery,** May 12-18, 2027, $4,099 pp/dbl w/BD*
  Group Booking # 221869
- **Colorado Rockies, Rails and Western National Parks,** August 8-16, 2027, $4,749 pp/dbl w/BD*
  Group Booking # 221868
- **Black Hills and Badlands,** September 7, 2027, 9 days, $3,699 pp/dbl wBD*
  Group Booking # 224267
- **Highlights of England, Scotland and Wales,** October 6, 2027 9 days, $5,049 pp/dbl w/BD*
  Group Booking # 221872
- **Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta and Santa Fe,** October 8-13, 2027, $4,049 pp/dbl w/BD*
  Group Booking # 221870



Brownstown Seniors also travel with Custom Holidays. Please check customholidaysonline.com for trips.

All trips will depart from the North side of the Community Center Parking on DuChene Service Drive by the clock tower (next to King Road) unless otherwise noted. unless otherwise noted.

Cashless Payments only – no cash or check

Small Changes, Big Financial Wins

How Community Focus Federal Credit Union is making a difference in members' lives



BEHIND every financial decision is a person, a family and a story. Sometimes, meaningful financial progress starts with something as simple as sitting down with someone who is willing to listen.

At Community Focus Federal Credit Union, our Certified Credit Union Financial Counselors help members understand their finances, work through challenges and create practical plans for moving forward.

For one longtime member, that guidance ultimately led to thousands of dollars in estimated savings.

The member came to Community Focus with an auto loan from another lender carrying an interest rate of approximately 21% APR*. Jessica, one of our financial counselors, reviewed the member's situation and helped develop a plan for improving their credit.

"We value the relationships we build with our members, so when we see an opportunity to help someone improve their financial situation, we do everything we can to help them get there," Jessica said.

The member followed the plan and returned several months later. With an improved credit score, the member was able to refinance the vehicle with Community Focus at 9.09% APR*. Based on the interest the member was projected to pay on the existing loan compared with the refinanced loan, the change was estimated to save more than $15,000 in interest over the remaining term.



For financial counselor Kirsty, another member's situation became personal.

As she listened to a single mother facing financial challenges, Kirsty could relate to what she was experiencing.

"Having kids of my own and being a single parent just like her, my heart broke for her," Kirsty said. "I knew what she was going through, and I wasn't going to turn down an opportunity to help change her life."

COMMUNITY FOCUS
Federal Credit Union

These experiences are a reminder that behind every credit score, loan balance and budget is a person with a unique story.

Our Certified Credit Union Financial Counselors provide confidential, judgment-free guidance to help members better understand their credit, manage debt, develop budgets and identify practical steps toward their goals. Counselors are available at both our Brownstown and Ecorse branches.

Whether someone is rebuilding credit, managing debt, preparing for a major purchase or simply trying to gain more control over their finances, progress often begins with a conversation.

Because sometimes having someone listen, understand your situation and help you create a plan can make a very real difference.

Your brighter financial future starts with a conversation. Visit CommunityFocusFCU.org or stop by our Brownstown or Ecorse branch to learn how we can help.

Community Focus Federal Credit Union serves individuals and families throughout Wayne and Monroe counties, with branch locations in Brownstown and Ecorse.

**APR = Annual Percentage Rate. Individual results will vary. Loan approval, rates and terms are subject to creditworthiness and other underwriting criteria. This example reflects one member's individual circumstances and is not a guarantee of approval, rate, payment reduction or savings. Community Focus Federal Credit Union is federally insured by NCUA.*

Employment Opportunities for All Abilities

STEP
Services To Enhance Potential

Services To Enhance Potential (STEP) is a non-profit organization that provides support and services to more than 1,100 individuals with disabilities and mental health needs residing in Wayne County. STEP helps individuals with barriers to employment reach their full potential and achieve their life goals through various programs and trainings. These include skill building, supported employment, volunteer opportunities, vocational rehabilitation, and more. With offerings like the Progressive Art Studio Collective (PASC), STEP in the Kitchen, and training at our three STEP Thrift Store and Donation Centers, STEP offers opportunities to individuals of all abilities.



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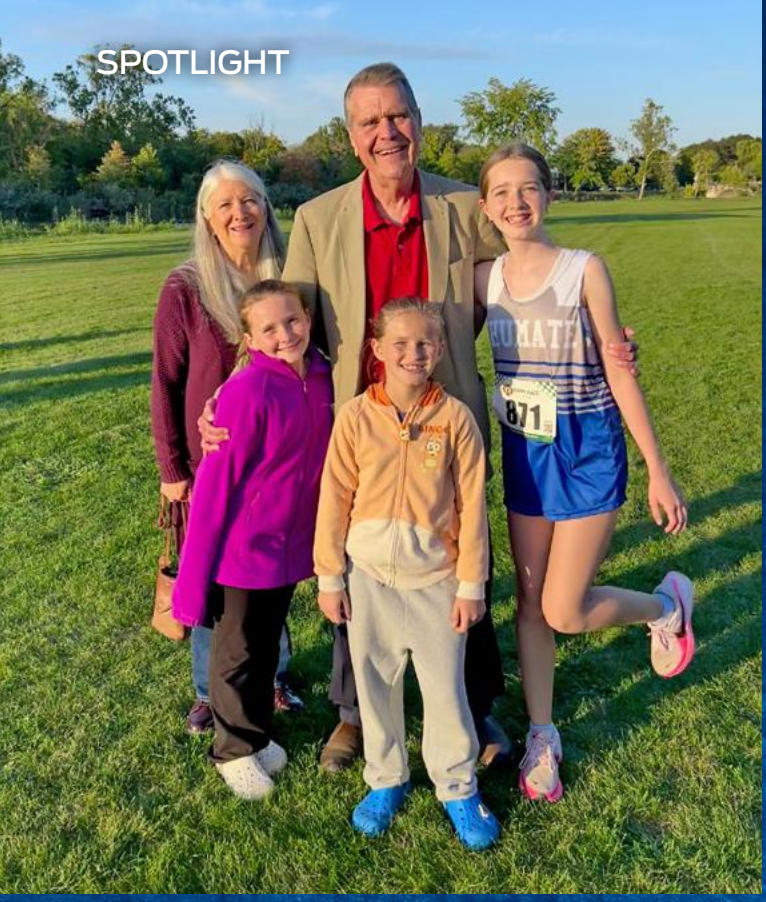
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Passion for Protection

A career devoted to restoring the Detroit River, reconnecting communities with nature

By Ryan M. Place

WHEN John Hartig was a boy, his father would take him fishing along the Detroit River, where the signs of industrial pollution were impossible to ignore.

"We'd see oil-coated rocks, oil floating on the water," Hartig recalled. "It was nauseating."

During summer vacations, they'd visit Torch Lake and other lakes throughout Michigan, where the water was remarkably different. That contrast helped inspire a lifelong career devoted to protecting and restoring the Great Lakes.

Born in Vancouver, Washington, Hartig's family settled in Allen Park in 1958. Hartig graduated from Allen Park High School in 1970 and earned bachelor's and master's degrees from Eastern Michigan University, before completing a doctorate in limnology, the ecological study of freshwaters, at the University of Windsor. A longtime Downriver resident, he later called Trenton home for 30 years.

From 1985 to 1999, Hartig worked for the International Joint Commission, focusing on cleaning up pollution hotspots throughout the Great Lakes.

In 1999, he became the Detroit River's "River Navigator," working with government officials, businesses and community leaders to advance environmental restoration and sustainable economic development.

"I'm a boundary-spanner," Hartig said. "Meaningful progress requires cooperation across political, geographic and scientific boundaries."

One of his greatest accomplishments came through the creation of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge in 2001, the first international wildlife refuge in North America.

Working alongside Congressman John Dingell, businessman Peter Stroh and other leaders, Hartig helped turn an ambitious conservation vision into reality. There were plenty of skeptics.

"This is an industrial town," Hartig recalled of the prevailing attitude. "But we believed the region could move beyond its reputation for pollution."

Hartig became the refuge's first full-time manager in 2004, serving for 14 years. Today, the refuge protects important wildlife habitats along the Detroit River and western Lake Erie. Its visitor center in Trenton offers a visitor center, walking trails, wildlife observation areas, a fishing pier, and opportunities for kayaking.

For Hartig, the river's ecological recovery has been nothing short of extraordinary.

"Bald eagles, peregrine falcons, osprey, lake sturgeon, beavers and river otters have returned to an ecosystem once utterly devastated by pollution," he said.

A persistent idealist who also knows how to get things done, Hartig is a prolific author, with eight books and approximately 160 scientific publications.

A former Fulbright Scholar, Hartig remains active as a visiting scholar at the University of Windsor. He also chairs the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan's Great Lakes Way Advisory Committee, helping connect communities with nature through greenways and water trails.



Outside his professional work, Hartig enjoys spending time with his three grandchildren, often visiting local eateries and parks, the wildlife refuge and other outdoor destinations.

For Hartig, seeing another generation enjoy the natural places he spent his career protecting may be one of the most meaningful measures of the Detroit River's truly remarkable recovery.

"I'm motivated by stewardship and thinking intergenerationally," he said. "Seeing my grandchildren enjoy this area makes it all worthwhile."

HOLIDAY *Happenings* Downriver



EXPLORE DOWNRIVER THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

ALLEN PARK	NOV. 20
WYANDOTTE	NOV. 21
BROWNSTOWN	DEC. 3
GROSSE ILE	DEC. 4
TAYLOR	DEC. 5
TRENTON	DEC. 5

DESTINATION DOWNRIVER DETROIT

#ItsHappening Downriver

SPONSORED MESSAGE

A True Partnership

Wealth advisors operate on trust, clarity and confidence

By Terry Jacoby

KEY CONCERNS is an independent, fee-based registered investment adviser based out of Wyandotte and Monroe. Founded in 1998 by the now successfully retired Barb Grose and Sue Waterhouse, the legacy of putting clients first continues today.



Co-owners Jennifer Brown and Erin Shelton want to work with people who share their values, want to be involved in the process and value a relationship built on trust.

"We take our fiduciary responsibility to our clients very seriously and will not hesitate to recommend a route that makes us less money," Shelton said. "Working with us requires laying a lot of cards on the table and opening up your finances so we first need to build trust."

Whether someone is just beginning to build wealth, preparing for retirement or navigating a major life transition, having a trusted financial professional can provide clarity and confidence.

"We're intentionally a smaller firm that takes the time to get to know our clients and understand what matters most to them," Brown said. "We believe financial planning should never feel intimidating, so we focus on making complex topics easier to understand and helping clients feel comfortable asking questions."

That relationship begins with a meeting to see if the fit is right – from both sides of the table.

"We believe financial planning works best when it's a true partnership," Brown said.

In a field dominated by men, Key Concerns has always been owned and operated by women and has stayed in the family since day one.

"I like that we are an independent firm, which means we are not fenced in by any one wealth manager or fund family, as some of the larger firms are," Shelton said.

For more information on Key Concerns, visit www.keyconcerns.com or call (734) 692-9282.

Key Concerns Inc.
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SPONSORED MESSAGE

You Don't Have to Do This Alone

Riverview Hospice provides compassion, answers the tough questions

MARY Reed founded Riverview Hospice Care with a vision to educate, encourage and empower the community by providing compassionate, personalized and dignified in-home hospice care.



Mary Reed , FNP-BC

As an expert in the field, with almost two decades of experience, Reed knows there are a lot of misconceptions and feelings about what hospice really is. She's there to answer those frightening questions that can make people uncomfortable.

1. Does choosing hospice mean giving up?
No. Hospice is about gaining quality of life, comfort and support. It's choosing to live each day with dignity.

2. Will hospice care only focus on the patient?
No. We support the whole family emotionally, spiritually and practically.

3. Can we still see our regular doctor?
Yes. We work together as a team to ensure the best possible care.

4. If we sign up for hospice, can we change our mind?
Yes. Hospice is always your choice. You can change your mind at any time. We're here when you're ready.

5. Do we have to do hospice care at a facility?
No. Most care is provided in the comfort of your home, surrounded by the people and things you love.

Riverview Hospice Care continues to grow, reaching more families across our community while staying true to its founding promise – to provide compassionate, personalized hospice care that celebrates life, honors legacy and embraces peace.

Riverview Hospice Care, Inc., is located at 1100 Eureka Road in Wyandotte.

A WORD ABOUT DNRS (DO NOT RESUSCITATE ORDERS):
Three clear answers for patients and families

Does hospice require a DNR order?
NO. A DNR is not required to receive hospice care. Hospice enrollment and DNR decisions are separate.

What does a DNR order mean?
It tells medical professionals not to start CPR if your breathing or heartbeat stops.

Does a DNR mean no more care?
No. A DNR concerns CPR only. Hospice continues comfort-based care and support for your family.

Riverview Hospice Care

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Amy Conway

Amy Conway,
Superintendent

BOND PROGRAM UPDATE

MANY improvements were completed or advanced during summer 2026 as Gibraltar School District continues to invest 2023 Bond Program funds into safer, more modern learning environments. Construction remains ongoing across several buildings, with additional projects scheduled for completion in the coming months and years.

Project Highlights

Parsons Elementary

- Heating system improvements, classroom painting, and new casework, including cabinets and bookshelves, were completed throughout the summer.
- Construction continues on the school's new classrooms and Gym addition, anticipated for completion in fall 2027.

Rockwood Early Learning Center

- Classroom flooring replacement is underway.
- Parking lot improvements are enhancing traffic flow and accessibility.
- Exterior façade was upgraded and created a more welcoming entry experience.

Carlson High School

- The auditorium was renovated with new seating, flooring, lighting, sound systems, and a refinished stage completed throughout the summer.
- The South Main entrance façade was replaced with new brick and metal paneling to create a modern appearance.

These projects reflect the district's continued commitment to providing safe, modern, and engaging learning environments that support student success for years to come.

WANT MORE?

Visit
Gibdist.net/Bond
For More Information
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District Bond Projects!

PROJECTS

CARLSON HIGH SCHOOL





ROCKWOOD EARLY LEARNING CENTER





PARSONS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL





HUNTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL





Gibraltar *continued on page 36*

Gibraltar *continued from page 35*



Brownstown Fire Department Brings Fire Safety to Hunter Elementary

STUDENTS at Hunter Elementary School enjoyed a special visit from the Brownstown Fire Department in October in recognition of Fire Prevention Week!

Throughout the visit, firefighters helped students learn important fire safety lessons, including how to recognize potential fire hazards, the importance of working smoke alarms, creating a family escape plan, and what to do in the event of a fire. Students were reminded that firefighters are helpers who keep our community safe, and the kids also had the chance to tour a fire truck.



Adding to the excitement, the fire department's mascot joined the visit, bringing plenty of smiles and making the experience even more memorable for our young Hornets!

On behalf of the Gibraltar School District, we extend a heartfelt thank you to the Brownstown Fire Department for its continued partnership with our schools and community. We are grateful for the time, care and dedication these first responders invest in educating our students and helping keep our families safe.

Partnerships like these make our schools and community stronger!

Downriver STEM at Weiss

Where Learning Comes to Life

AT Downriver STEM at Weiss Elementary, STEM is happening every day! Our students are learning by doing, working together, asking questions, solving problems, testing ideas, and thinking creatively.



Walk through our building and you might see students working as engineers to design and build electrical systems using solar energy, working together to rescue a stranded "shipmate," creating human number lines to solve math problems or collaborating on projects that connect classroom learning to real-world challenges.

Our students are also developing important skills beyond academics. Through STEM and project-based learning, they are learning how to communicate their ideas, listen to others, persevere when something doesn't work, and work as a team to find solutions.

From our youngest Wildcats learning the power of teamwork to our oldest students designing a student government and using their voices to make a difference in their school community, STEM is helping our students become confident thinkers, creative problem-solvers and innovative leaders.

We are proud to be Downriver STEM at Weiss, where learning comes to life!





Gibraltar *continued on page 38*

GIBRALTAR SCHOOL DISTRICT

SEMESTER 2 SCHOOL OF CHOICE







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Gibraltar continued from page 36

Introducing...Marauder Made

WELCOME to Marauder Made, a new feature that will highlight current students and alumni of Gibraltar School District who are putting their education and experience to good use, finding ways to help improve their community, and the world at large.

Join us in celebrating these shining stars, who got their start in Gibraltar School District!

Gibraltar School District Alum

Shawn (Miles) STIRLING



FOR Carlson High School graduate Shawn (Miles) Stirling, being "Marauder Made" is more than a connection to where she went to school. It is a story that spans three generations and has ultimately brought her right back to where it all began.

A member of Carlson's Class of 1987, Shawn attended Barrow Elementary, Shumate Middle School and Carlson High School. Some of her favorite memories came from her years in the Carlson Marching Band. Between band camp, practices, performances, and countless hours spent together, her fellow band members became like family. Many of those friendships have lasted nearly four decades.

After graduating from Carlson, Shawn attended Siena Heights University. She initially planned to pursue nursing, but a part-time job with an engineering firm introduced her to accounting. She discovered that she loved the problem-solving and critical-thinking aspects of the field and changed her major, earning her bachelor's degree in accounting.

That decision eventually led Shawn back home.

Today, after more than 28 years working in school district finance, Shawn serves as director of finance for Gibraltar School District, where she is now in her 11th year. For Shawn, there is something particularly meaningful about building a career in the same district that helped shape her.

Her connection to GSD also extends across generations. Her parents attended Gibraltar schools, Shawn is a Carlson graduate, and her twin sons, Samuel and Seth, are part of the Marauder story as well. Even today, Shawn's dad can still be found at Carlson football games cheering on the Marauders.

Looking back, Shawn credits her GSD experiences with teaching her responsibility, communication, teamwork, and the importance of relationships. Those lessons continue to influence how she approaches her career and community involvement, including representing the district as a member of the Gibraltar Rotary.

Her advice for today's Marauders reflects the path she followed herself: "Do what you love regardless of the money. No amount of money can make you love something that your heart is not into. Follow your heart."

For Shawn, following her heart ultimately led her home.

"All these years later, I still love being a Marauder," she said. "From my education here to my career, I can think of no place I'd rather be than where it all started."

Three generations, countless memories and a career dedicated to serving the district she grew up in. **Once a Marauder, always a Marauder.**

MARAUDER

Carlson High School Senior

Farah ESSAF



CARLSON High School senior Farah Essaf has spent her time in Gibraltar School District discovering how her interests in medicine, public health and service can make a difference well beyond the classroom.

A GSD student since elementary school, Farah attended Weiss Elementary and Shumate Middle School before coming to Carlson. Today, one of the accomplishments she is most proud of is becoming the author of the children's heart-health education book, "My Friend, Heart".

The idea for the book grew from Farah's goal of making health education more accessible, especially for younger children. After seeing another student use a children's book to teach about dental health, Farah began exploring how she could do something similar with heart health. She connected with The Heart Foundation and then took on the challenge of learning the publishing process herself. Proceeds from the book benefit the foundation, extending the impact of her work even further.

For Farah, however, writing the book was only the beginning. She has brought heart-health education directly to younger students through workshops, including at Weiss Elementary, where her own GSD journey began. She also founded Cardio4youth, a student-led heart-health education organization that provides seminars and awareness opportunities, as well as Carlson's Healthcare Club.

Her passion for medicine and public health has also been shaped by educators at Carlson. Farah credits Dr. Rice, her AP psychology teacher, with challenging her to consider different perspectives and introducing her to academic research and writing. She also points to Mr. Gervasi and her experience in AP U.S. Government as helping her recognize the important connection between public policy, health and community well-being.

After graduation, Farah plans to pursue a double major in biochemistry and public health sciences, with the long-term goal of combining medicine and public health.

To Farah, being "Marauder Made" is about community, connection and using your strengths to make a difference. Her journey from a student at Weiss Elementary to a published author and health advocate is a wonderful example of just that.

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BROWNSTOWN TOWNSHIP BICENTENNIAL LOGO CONTEST

Local designer Brandon Smith's winning design

AS Brownstown Charter Township prepares to celebrate a remarkable milestone – its 200th anniversary in 2027 – a local graphic designer has earned a special place in the community's history.

Brandon Smith, a resident of Woodhaven, has been selected as the winner of the Brownstown Township Bicentennial Logo Design Contest. His winning design will serve as a visual symbol of the township's bicentennial celebration, helping residents commemorate two centuries of local history, community pride and progress.

> *"This bicentennial logo celebrates 200 years of Brownstown's history while highlighting the township's connection to community, nature and future growth. The bold '200' symbolizes strength and longevity while the shoreline scene within the design reflects Brownstown's ties to water, wetlands and the Lake Erie region.*
>
> *The flowing pathway represents progress and the journey from 1827 to 2027. Marsh grasses and birds symbolize the area's natural beauty, freedom and optimism for the future. The clean typography and modern vector styling were designed to feel timeless and versatile across signage, apparel, and digital media.*
>
> *The navy, blue and green color palette represents stability, water, growth, and community pride. The tagline: '200 Years. One Community. Our Future.' reinforces Brownstown's shared history and vision for the future."*
>
> **Brandon Smith**

The contest was organized as part of the preparations for Brownstown's upcoming bicentennial, marking the township's founding in 1827. Open to adults from the community and beyond, the competition invited artists and designers to create an original logo that would capture the spirit of Brownstown's past while celebrating its future.

Participants were challenged to develop a design suitable for a wide variety of uses, including promotional materials, commemorative merchandise, signage, publications, and digital communications. Entries were required to incorporate the township's name, a reference to its bicentennial or 200-year anniversary and the commemorative dates of 1827–2027.

The winning entry would become the official emblem of this once-in-a-generation celebration, with its creator receiving a $500 prize.



Brandon with wife Crystal and daughter Ella, on the day he was honored for the winning design.

For Smith, the contest offered an opportunity to apply his professional design skills to a project with lasting local significance. He works professionally as a designer at www.Loudmouth.tv, bringing creative experience to a competition that called for both artistic vision and an appreciation of local history.

His selection is particularly fitting given the close ties between Woodhaven and Brownstown. The neighboring Downriver communities share a rich regional heritage, and Smith's contribution demonstrates how local talent can help celebrate the history and identity of the places we call home.

While a logo may seem like a small part of a 200th anniversary celebration, its importance extends well beyond its appearance. A successful commemorative emblem brings together history, identity and civic pride in a single recognizable image. It becomes a symbol that residents can rally around and a lasting reminder of a significant moment in their community's story.

Smith's design will help give Brownstown's bicentennial a distinctive visual identity as the township approaches its historic anniversary.

CELEBRATING 200 YEARS OF BROWNSTOWN HISTORY

Founded in 1827, Brownstown Township has witnessed extraordinary changes over the past two centuries. From its early days as a developing community in southeastern Michigan to its growth into the vibrant township residents know today, Brownstown's history reflects generations of families, businesses and community leaders who have helped shape its character.

The 2027 bicentennial offers an opportunity not only to remember those who came before us, but also to celebrate the people who continue to contribute to Brownstown's future.

Congratulations to Brandon Smith on this well-deserved recognition, and thank you to everyone who participated in the contest and contributed their creativity to this special community project!

www.brownstownhistory.org

Michigan's Unsung Heroes of Fall

What would the season be without farmers and orchards?

By Kelsi Klein

ALTHOUGH summer seems to go by too fast, fall in Michigan is a welcomed season. From visiting pumpkin patches to drinking fresh apple cider, fall traditions are highly anticipated each year.

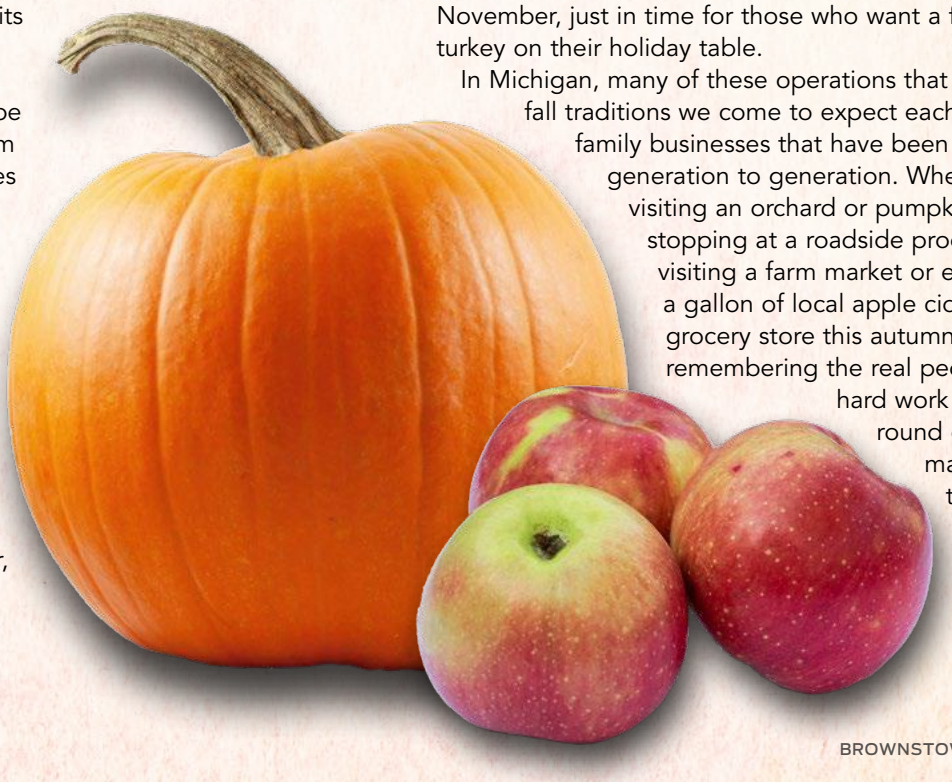
For many people, these traditions simply come with the territory of changing leaves and dropping temperatures, but behind every crisp apple, ripe orange pumpkin and jar of local honey are dedicated folks whose work begins long before September arrives.

Michigan's farmers, orchard owners, greenhouse growers, turkey farmers and more shape the harvest season, making fall traditions possible for all to enjoy.

Thanks to its climate, proximity to lakes and nutrient-rich soil, Michigan is the ideal place to grow apples. According to the United States Department of Agriculture, the state is the second largest apple-producing state in America, with approximately 850 family-run farms producing over one billion pounds of apples each year.

Though apples are harvested from mid-to-late August through October, apple farming is a year-round job. Without these farms and farmers, fall staples like apple cider, apple pie and visits to the apple orchard wouldn't exist.

And what would fall be without pumpkins? From visiting pumpkin patches to pick the perfect Halloween jack-o-lanterns to indulging in a classic pumpkin pie on Thanksgiving, the orange winter squash is a sign of fall. Farmers plant seeds in late spring, and the plants require maintenance throughout the summer, taking 90-120 days to mature from seed to harvest.



Michigan beekeepers play a vital role in not only honey production, but also pollination. According to Michigan State University, about 50 percent of Michigan's fruit and vegetable industry depends on honeybees. Michigan fall honey is harvested between late August and early October and is a darker, full-bodied honey – perfect for fall baked goods and hot drinks. Beekeepers work year-round to maintain hives and protect the bees from parasites, disease, starvation and more.

Greenhouses and family farms continue working long after the spring and summer season, extending local produce supply past the first outdoor frost, helping make late-season crops and cool-season greens available at local farmers markets.

Michigan is the 15th largest producer of turkeys in the country, and turkey farmers begin prepping for Thanksgiving months in advance. Farmers typically receive young poults in early July, and they grow for about 16-20 weeks on a grain-based diet on local farms. They reach their full market weight and are ready for processing in November, just in time for those who want a fresh, local turkey on their holiday table.

In Michigan, many of these operations that bring us the fall traditions we come to expect each season are family businesses that have been passed from generation to generation. Whether it's visiting an orchard or pumpkin patch, stopping at a roadside produce stand, visiting a farm market or even buying a gallon of local apple cider at the grocery store this autumn, it's worth remembering the real people whose hard work and year-round commitment make all the things we love about fall possible.



A Law Enforcement Career

It doesn't always start with a badge

By Deputy Chief Andrew Starzec

WHEN people think about a career in law enforcement, they often picture a police officer in uniform. But an effective police department depends on much more than sworn officers. It takes a team of people with different skills, experiences and perspectives working toward a common mission: serving and protecting the community.

At the Brownstown Township Police Department, police service officers (PSOs) play an important part in that mission. These civilian professionals support essential operations, including detention responsibilities, records management and administrative functions. Their work keeps the department running efficiently and helps maintain the professionalism residents expect.

Some of the most important work in this department happens out of public view. Our police service officers keep daily operations running smoothly. If you want to serve your community and grow professionally, this is a meaningful place to start your career.

What a PSO Does

On any given shift, a PSO may help monitor and care for people in custody, process reports and records, assist residents who call or visit the station, and support officers so they can spend more time on the road. Every new PSO completes a structured training program designed specifically for the role, so no prior law enforcement experience is required.

A Different Path into Law Enforcement

For anyone interested in criminal justice or public service, a civilian position offers a firsthand look at how a police department really works. It is a chance to learn, build professional skills and explore a future in the field.

For some, this experience is the first step toward becoming a sworn police officer. For others, it leads to a rewarding career in civilian public safety, administration or operational support. Both paths strengthen the department.

Different Strengths. One Mission.

Not everyone brings the same experience to public safety, and that is a strength. Clear communication, attention to detail, sound judgment, technical knowledge, empathy, organization, and teamwork all have a place in modern policing.

Some people excel at direct community engagement. Others make their greatest contributions through investigations, records, dispatch, detention operations, technology, or administrative support. Each function matters, and the right combination of people helps a department meet the changing needs of its community.

Public safety is a shared responsibility, and meaningful service takes many forms.

Your Future in Public Safety

You do not have to begin as a sworn officer to make a difference. Whether you are a student considering criminal justice, someone looking for a career change or a resident who simply wants to serve your hometown, a civilian role may be the right place to start.

To learn more about current openings, visit Brownstownmi.gov or contact the Brownstown Township Police Department at (734) 675-1300.

A career in law enforcement doesn't always start with a badge. Sometimes it starts with discovering how your unique strengths can serve something bigger than yourself.

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C-MAC TRANSPORTATION

THE SPIRIT OF THE SEASON:
Gratitude, Giving and Community

A holiday message from Fire Chief Ryan Raumen and Deputy Fire Chief Dave Zurawski

As Thanksgiving and Christmas approach, we are reminded to slow down, appreciate the people around us and recognize the many ways we can make a difference in our community. Between busy schedules, holiday shopping and family gatherings, it is easy to overlook the true meaning of the season. Yet, some of the greatest gifts we can give are not found under a Christmas tree, but in the kindness, compassion and generosity we share with others.

Gratitude Begins with the Little Things

Thanksgiving gives us an opportunity to reflect on the blessings in our lives, whether it is a warm home, a meal shared with loved ones, a supportive friend, or a neighbor willing to lend a hand. Gratitude does not require everything to be perfect. Sometimes, simply saying thank you, checking in on a friend or spending time with someone who needs company can make a world of difference.



As we move into the Christmas season, we are reminded that giving is about much more than presents. Donating food, providing winter clothing, supporting a family in need, or volunteering your time are all meaningful ways to spread holiday cheer. The value of a gift is not measured by its price, but by the thought, care and compassion behind it.

Stronger Together Through Giving

The Brownstown Fire Department is proud to work alongside community organizations that help make the holiday season brighter for local families. Our charity work throughout the year reflects the importance of neighbors helping neighbors and organizations working together to support those in need. These efforts remind us that a strong community is built on people who care enough to step forward and make a difference. We encourage residents to support local charitable efforts whenever possible.

The holidays can also be a difficult time for those experiencing financial hardship, grief or loneliness. A friendly conversation, an invitation to share a meal or a simple check-in can remind someone that they are not forgotten. Sometimes the most meaningful thing we can give is our time.

A Safe and Happy Holiday Season

As you celebrate, please remember to keep safety part of your holiday traditions. Never leave cooking unattended, keep candles away from flammable materials, water live Christmas trees regularly, and keep space heaters at least three feet from anything that can burn. Test your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms and make sure everyone in your household knows two ways out of every room and where to meet outside.

From our fire department family to yours, we wish you a Thanksgiving filled with gratitude and a Christmas filled with joy, peace and meaningful moments with loved ones. Thank you for allowing us to serve this wonderful community throughout the year.

This holiday season, give thanks, give generously, look out for one another, and remember that the smallest act of kindness can make the biggest difference.

Your Brownstown Fire Department wishes you and your family a safe and happy holiday season!

Be Their Safe Place in the Storm

How to deal with kids' negative body images

By Tracy Willis



ADOLESCENCE is a time of huge changes – physically, emotionally, sexually, and socially. With all the upheaval, it's not surprising that teens and young adults sometimes struggle with body image. Add societal pressures and imagery, and the scales seem tipped in favor of the struggle.

In fact, according to the American Psychological Association, teens and young adults who reduced their social media use by 50 percent for just a few weeks saw significant improvement in how they felt about their weight and overall appearance when compared with peers who didn't change their social media habits.

That's a startling statistic.

Recognize when your child might have a negative body image.

Not every child says, "I hate how I look." Negative body image can show up in subtle ways. Your child might avoid mirrors, photos, swimming, or wearing certain clothing. They might compare themselves to their friends or social media influencers. You might see eating or exercising behavioral changes. All of these can be signals that your child is struggling.

So, what can parents do to support their children?



Address the elephant in the room.

Social media. Tik Tok. Facebook. Instagram. It's everywhere. Delay your child's introduction to social media for as long as possible. Wait Until 8th, an online network that encourages parents to stick together and delay smartphone access until age 14 (eighth grade), states that early smartphone usage is linked to increased eating disorders and other mental health issues. Limiting your child's smartphone access and screen time is a research-supported first step in counteracting childhood body image issues.

Pay attention to how your family talks about bodies.

Children are sponges. Focus on what you're modeling for them. Avoid criticizing your own or others' bodies. Reframe your own "diet talk" into conversations about strength and health. Try to avoid judgment vocabulary like "good," "bad," "fat," "ugly," and "beautiful."

Talk more about body function than body appearance.

Imagine watching your daughter at her dance recital. You beam with pride. Instead of saying, "You looked beautiful up there, honey." Flip your remarks. "Your body is so strong and powerful."

When you flip the focus to your child's capabilities, their focus becomes accomplishment instead of appearance.

Listen first. Talk later.

When your child says she hates her body, your instinct is to jump in with, "But you're beautiful. Don't say that." That tends to immediately shut down your child's emotions and subsequent conversation. This is an opportunity for discussion and understanding. Try this instead:

- Pause and listen.
- Acknowledge her feelings: "That must be hard."
- Ask, "What makes you feel that way?"

When your child feels heard instead of reassured, the hard emotions might not feel so difficult.

It's hard to see your child, one of the loves of your life, struggle with self-image. They are your pride and joy. If body image concerns affect your child's mental health or daily functioning, it's wise to seek help. Reach out to your child's pediatrician, school counselors or adolescent/childhood therapists. Early support keeps negative patterns from becoming ingrained.

Although you can't protect your child from all the negative influences swirling around them, you can be their safe place in the storm.



Tracy has been teaching for over 30 years in and out of Michigan. She currently teaches middle school and spends her free time writing for publications and small businesses. When she's not putting pencil to paper or dreaming up ways to inspire her English students, she can be found in the woods on the trails.

How the Victorian Era Shaped Modern Christmas Traditions

By Kelsi Klein

HAVE you ever wondered why we decorate Christmas trees, exchange Christmas cards, hang stockings or go through the process of decorating our homes for the holidays? Some of the traditions that define Christmas as we know it came directly from the Victorian era.

In America's early days, Christmas celebrations, or lack thereof, varied by region. Many New England settlers with Puritan roots avoided them, while southern colonies modeled their Christmas celebrations after English traditions with multi-day festivities.

According to Mackinac State Historic Parks, as the United States developed a stronger national identity through immigration and westward expansion, the evolution of Christmas in America was shaped by a combination of old and new traditions alike.

The Victorian era and the Gilded Age in the late 19th century brought industrialization, economic growth and urbanization, introducing the rise of the middle class. American Christmas festivities during this time began to take place inside homes with family gatherings, Christmas trees, cards, gifts and more. Many Victorian customs are still at the heart of American Christmas traditions today.



Christmas trees

Though the concept of decorating Christmas trees started in Germany in the 1500s, it was popularized during the Victorian Era when a drawing of Queen Victoria, Prince Albert and their children standing around a decorated Christmas tree was published in Illustrated London News in 1848.

Early trees featured decorations like dried fruits, popcorn strings and open-flamed candles, which gave way to today's themed ornaments, family keepsakes and much safer string lights.

Christmas cards

While the practice of sending Christmas cards in the mail has declined in recent years in exchange for posting digital versions on social media, the first commercial Christmas card was commissioned by Sir Henry Cole in England in 1843. According to the Smithsonian, by 1875 the first American Christmas card was produced in a print shop near Boston.

By the early 1900s, the Hallmark company was born and it spearheaded the greeting card industry in America. To this day, Americans hold on to Victorian traditions of displaying their Christmas cards on fireplace mantels, doorways and refrigerators.



Gift giving

Prior to the Victorian era, gift-giving usually took place around New Year's Day and other winter celebrations, but as Christmas celebrations expanded, families began hanging small gifts on their trees for their children or hanging stockings with basic items like sweets, a fresh orange, a small coin or a single toy.

As industrialization advanced, mass production, consumerism and extra spending money gave families the opportunity to purchase larger gifts that were placed under the tree. Today, according to the National Retail Federation, holiday shopping accounts for nearly 20 percent of total annual retail sales in America.

Christmas cheer and holiday spirit

Much of what we know today as "Christmas cheer" stemmed from Victorian era traditions of family celebrations, traditional dinners, charity and goodwill. Christmas became a federal holiday in 1870 and has since shaped American culture from both a religious and secular standpoint.

Today, Michigan is home to many Victorian-style Christmas celebrations, most notably the annual Holly Dickens Festival. To get a firsthand look at what Victorian Christmas was like in southeast Michigan, check your local historical museums as many decorate for Christmas each year.



AROUND Brownstown

December - March



DECEMBER

December 3

Tree Lighting

6-8 p.m.
Brownstown Event Center
23345 King Road
Kick off the holiday season with fun for all ages. There will be food trucks, a DJ, outdoor heaters, s'mores over the fire pit, entertainment, crafts, ice carvings, petting farm, reindeer, and much more. Bring a toy to donate to the Goodfellows Toy collection. For more information, visit www.brownstownmi.gov.



December 11

Carriage Rides and Cocoa

6-8 p.m.
Brownstown Event Center
23345 King Road
Groups of up to six people are welcome for a night of festive fun. $5/person in advance only, registration is required. Call (734) 675-0920 to register.



December 12

Breakfast with Santa

10 a.m.-12 p.m.
Brownstown Event Center
23345 King Road
Enjoy a morning full of fun with breakfast, visits with Santa and more. Pre-registration is required. $15/person. Register at www.brownstownmi.gov.

December 12

Sensory Friendly Santa

1-2:30 p.m.
Brownstown Event Center
23345 King Road
This sensory event is open to those with autism and/or sensory issues and their families. Meet Santa, enjoy hot chocolate, crafts, cookies and more. For more information, visit www.brownstownmi.gov.

FEBRUARY

February 6

Family Dance

6-8 p.m.
Brownstown Community Center
21311 Telegraph Road
Come out and enjoy pizza, dancing, treats and selfie photo booth! This year's dance theme is "Once Upon A Time". Tickets in advance only at Brownstown Community Center or online. Tickets: $18 per person (Adult/Child). All ages welcome; 2 years and up must have a ticket.

MARCH

March 13

Family Candy Bar BINGO!

Shamrocks and Sweets for Shelter Animals
1 p.m.
Brownstown Community Center
21311 Telegraph Road
This is an all-ages event! Entry fee is one candy bar per player and a donation to the animal shelter (treats or toys). No need to sign up ahead of time! Bingo will start at 1 p.m. at the Community Center. We will play until candy bars are gone (around two hours). Bingo prizes will be candy bars! Don't forget to wear your green in honor of St. Patrick's Day!

PLEASE NOTE: Event details may have changed. Please check event website or social pages for the most up-to-date information.

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