

COLUMBIA



UPDATE APRIL 2021



TOWN OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE FIRST SELECTMAN



At the time of this newsletter's publication we have as a community and a nation been dealing with the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic for over a year. Vaccine roll-outs have been progressing with the next phase of eligibility for 16 years of age or older starting on April 1st.

You will find on the following pages important information on vaccines and testing.

We are in the process of taking the necessary procedures to open town departments to the public without an appointment on April 12, 2021. We are working closely with Eastern Highland Health District on guidance protocols for re-opening.

The annual budget process is in full-swing with the Board of Selectmen and Board of Education budgets presented to the Financial Planning and Allocation Commission (FiPAC). FiPAC is currently holding their budget workshops to discuss and deliberate on the proposed budget and will hold a public hearing to gather citizen input. After considering all input, FiPAC will recommend its proposed budget to a Town Meeting for final vote and approval.

All budget meetings are being held by utilizing remote access. Please check the Town of Columbia's [website](#) for login information. On Page 8 of this newsletter is the list of upcoming meetings for April.

I would like to thank the Department of Public Works for their work on the back parking lot at Rec Park over the winter. They have done a tremendous job handling the tree removal, parking lot foundation, and the preparation for final milling and top coat.



IMPORTANT INFORMATION ON COVID-19 VACCINES: At the time of this publication Anyone 16 years of age or older will be eligible for a COVID-19 vaccination starting tomorrow April 1st. Please be advised that at approximately 8:30 AM tomorrow morning, April 1st, Eastern Highland Health District (EHHD) will be posting 600 vaccination appointments to [VAMS](#). Please note that the vaccine made available by EHHD is for those 18 years of age or older. EHHD will not be vaccinating persons 16 or 17 years of age. The larger healthcare networks, and pharmacies will be making the Pfizer vaccine available to 16 and 17 year old individuals.

For those that wish to create an account in VAMS, and schedule an appointment with an EHHD clinic please follow this link: <https://covidvaccinefinder.ct.gov/vams/101>

UConn Health (Hawley Armory – Storrs Campus): This clinic, staffed by UConn Health personnel, is open 3 to 4 days per week. UConn Health will be making between 1200 and 2000 appointments available each week at this clinic location, pending vaccine availability. To make an appointment at this location please follow this link: <https://mychart.uconn.edu/mychart/Signup>

Individuals may also call the UConn Health Vaccine Scheduling telephone line at 860-679-5589.

Area Pharmacies and other area providers: A number of area pharmacies are also making appointments available on a weekly basis. Please follow this [link](#) to information on appointment availability to these, and other vaccine providers in your area.

Please note, area vaccine providers will be updating their appointment schedules on a regular basis. For those that are unable to make an appointment right away, please check back periodically as more appointments will be made available as more vaccine is allocated.

Need Help? Call the Beckish Senior Center (860-228-0759) or Columbia Social Services (860-228-1008) if you don't have an email account. We can help you get registered on-line!

COVID-19 VACCINATION SCHEDULING OPTIONS:

Schedule by Phone: COVID Vaccine Appointment Assistance line at 877-918-2224 or Hartford Healthcare Vaccine Hotline at 860-972-4993.

Schedule through the Vaccine Administration Management System (VAMS): Local health clinics, health districts, and some providers schedule through [VAMS](#). This system requires an email account.

Schedule directly with the below providers:

- [CVS Pharmacy](#)
- [Hartford Healthcare](#)
- [Walgreens](#)
- [Walmart](#)
- [Yale New Haven Health](#)

Search ALL vaccine providers by location on [211ct.org](#)

COVID-19 Vaccine Clinics- As part of the SAVE LIVES Act, these clinics are open to all veterans regardless of VA enrollment status and to veteran spouses.

April 1 and 2

- West Haven Annex/Errera Center, 200 Edison Road/Pez Blvd. in Orange. Walk-ins from 11am-3pm.
- Newington Campus, 555 Willard Avenue, Bldg. 2E-Basement from 8am-3pm.

For more information call 203-932-5711 ext. 5627, 7784 or 7754

Key Information for Attendees:

- Eligible veterans (any age) must be enrolled for care with VA to receive the vaccine. Veterans can apply on-line at <https://www.va.gov/health-care/how-to-apply/>.
- The VA are administering the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines. Location will determine which vaccine you receive.
- Availability is first come, first served at walk-in clinics.
- Mask and physical distancing required. To maintain physical distancing, if possible, please don't bring anyone with you to the clinic.

COVID-19 TESTING SITES: For the most up-to-date information on testing sites please visit [EHHD](#) or the [State of Connecticut website](#). Residents can also subscribe to text message alerts from the state by texting the keyword **COVIDCT** to **888-777**.

Thank you and please be safe.

Steven M. Everett, First Selectman
severett@columbiact.org
860-228-0110



*Mono Pond Early Spring
Photo Credit: Paul Ramsey*



TOWN OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

As mentioned we are anticipating opening to the public without an appointment on April 12, 2021; however, we continue to encourage residents to use on-line services. Online services include [Tax Payments](#), [Transfer Station Stickers](#) (available online May 1st) and obtaining [Building Permits](#). We also encourage residents to use the drop-boxes at Yeoman's Hall and Town Hall for tax payments, correspondence, permits, Transfer Station stickers, Dog License, etc. Please respect our safety guidelines by wearing a mask when entering the building, use hand sanitizer at the entrance, and observe social distancing guidelines.

With spring upon us Columbia Lake is quickly filling up. The Town of Columbia will hold its annual Boat Mooring Lottery at the Board of Selectmen meeting scheduled for Tuesday, April 20, 2021 at 7:00 PM in the Adella G. Urban Administrative Offices Conference Room. Please see the Recreation Departments page in this newsletter or visit our [website](#) for more information.

Beach Passes and Transfer Station Stickers will be available May 1, 2021. Look for information on our website, next month's newsletter and a mailer will be sent out to each

**TOWN OFFICES ARE CLOSED
FOR GOOD FRIDAY 4/2/21**

resident with all the particulars.

THE TOWN OF COLUMBIA IS ACCEPTING ONLINE DONATIONS: The Town of Columbia is accepting donations to assist those in need during the COVID-19 pandemic. Donations may be used for food supply, fuel assistance, protective equipment and other social services that will benefit those affected by COVID-19. Donations can be made by check, payable to the Town of Columbia or [online](#).

The Beckish Senior Center provides a local MOBILE Foodshare EVERY OTHER THURSDAY from 1:00 PM to 1:30 PM. The dates for April are the 8th and 22nd.

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FOOD DISTRIBUTION AT RENTSCHLER FIELD, 615 SILVER LANE, EAST HARTFORD, CT.

Rentschler Field Food Distribution Schedule

Rentschler Field - Silver Lane Entrance: 615 Silver Lane, East Hartford, CT 06118 9:30 AM - 1:00 PM

OPEN: Tuesdays & Thursdays

CLOSED: Every Monday, Wednesday, Friday

Important information:

- More Food Resources: www.foodshare.org/coronavirus
- One allocation of food per car to ensure that there is enough food for everyone.

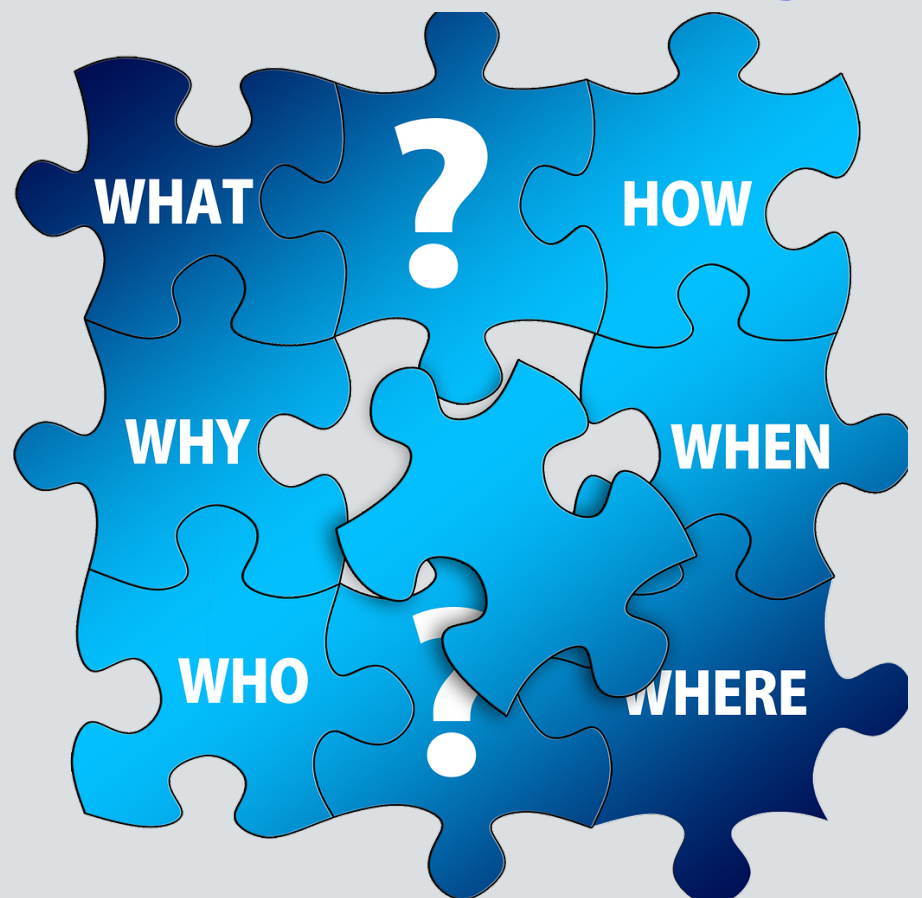
EVERBRIDGE NOTIFICATIONS: We will from time to time issue an Everbridge Notification with a message from the First Selectman, Steven M. Everett to help keep you informed. If you would like to sign up for Everbridge Notifications please go to the Town's website and on the [Everbridge Notifications](#) tab.

EMAIL NOTIFICATIONS: To receive Town news please go to the Town's website and click on the [Email Notifications](#) tab.

If you need assistance please do not hesitate to call the Town Administrative Office or the First Selectman at 860-228-0110 or email us at townadministrator@columbiact.org.

Mark B. Walter, Town Administrator
323 Route 87
Columbia, CT 06237
860-228-0110

Find us on 



UPCOMING TOWN MEETINGS

Due to the current COVID-19 Emergency, meetings will be held by utilizing remote access. Each board or committee will provide the information needed to join using an on-line conferencing platform.

Please check the Town of Columbia's [website](#) for updates.

UPCOMING TOWN MEETINGS

- 4/01/21 Thur: Szegda Farm Management Committee, 6:00 PM
- 4/01/21 Thur: Recreation Commission, 6:00 PM
- 4/01/21 Thur: Columbia Conservation and Agriculture Commission, 7:00 PM
- 4/05/21 Mon: Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission, 7:00 PM
- 4/05/21 Mon: Board of Education, 7:30 PM
- 4/06/21 Tue: Board of Selectmen, 7:00 PM
- 4/07/21 Wed: Financial Planning and Allocation Commission, 7:00 PM
- 4/12/21 Mon: Planning and Zoning Commission, 7:00 PM
- 4/14/21 Wed: Fiscal Policy Board, 8:30 AM
- 4/14/21 Wed: Youth Services Committee, 5:30 PM
- 4/14/21 Wed: Financial Planning and Allocation Commission (FiPAC) Tentative, 7:00 PM
- 4/15/21 Thur: Open Space Commission, 8:00 AM
- 4/20/21 Tue: Environmental Advisory Committee, 5:30 PM
- 4/20/21 Tue: Board of Selectmen, 7:00 PM
- 4/21/21 Wed: Safety Committee, 1:30 PM
- 4/22/21 Thur: Zoning Board of Appeals, 7:00 PM
- 4/26/21 Mon: Planning and Zoning Commission, 7:00 PM
- 4/28/21 Wed: Public Hearing on budget with FIPAC Special Meeting to follow, 7:00 PM

In accordance with Governor Lamont's Executive Order 7B and social distancing guidelines recommended by the CDC to slow community spread of COVID-19, meetings are physically closed to the public. We encourage residents to join via Zoom and to provide your comments and input during the meetings utilizing the "Chat" feature in Zoom, or providing comment during the Audience of Citizens/Public Comment portion of the meeting. Public Comment will be accepted by our dedicated email at PublicInput@columbiact.org or by USPS mail to 323 Route 87, Columbia, CT 06237 and must be received 24 hours prior to the meeting (public comment received after the meeting will be shared at the next meeting).

TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION

ASSESSORS OFFICE The **Renter's Relief program** will begin April 1 and will run through October 1st. You will need proof of rent payments and utilities paid in the 2020 calendar year.

Motor Vehicle Adjustments

In order to have a motor vehicle bill adjusted we need **two** forms of proof because the tax is a car tax not a road tax.

- The first is a copy of your motor vehicle plate return receipt .
- The second is something proving you got rid of the vehicle. For a list of accepted proofs look on the assessor's website or call the office.
- If you traded a vehicle and kept the same plate do not bring us any documentation because DMV will automatically process the adjustments.

Income and Expense Forms

Connecticut General Statute 12-63c requires all owners of rental real property to annually file an Income and Expense form with the Assessor's Office by June 1st. **The information filed and furnished with this report will remain confidential and is not open to public inspection.** Any information related to the actual rental and operating expenses shall not be a public record and is not subject to the provisions of Section 1-19 (Freedom of Information) of the Connecticut General Statutes. All properties that are rented or leased, including commercial, retail, industrial, land and residential properties, except "*such property used for residential purposes, containing not more than six dwelling units and in which the owner resides*" must file and in the case of a non-residential property that is partially rented and partially owner-occupied.

In accordance with Section 12-63c(d), of the Connecticut General Statutes, as amended, any owner of rental real property who fails to file this form or files an incomplete or false form with intent to defraud, shall be subject to a penalty assessment equal to a **Ten Percent (10%)** increase in the assessed value of such property.

The Assessor's Office is open Monday through Wednesday from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m., Thursdays 8 a.m. until 6 p.m. and Fridays 8 a.m. until Noon. Our telephone number is 228-9555.

TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION

BECKISH SENIOR CENTER The Beckish Senior Center is closed to the public until further notice due to the Corona Virus. We ask that you please stay home and stay safe.

WE ARE AVAILABLE

BY PHONE AND EMAIL:

Monday—Friday 8am-3pm

Bernadette Derring—Director of Senior Services

Beckish@columbiact.org

860-228-0759 ext. 1

Town Administrator's Office

860-228-0110

Transportation Services are available

TRANSPORTATION The Town of Columbia's Transportation Program is running with limited seating. We operate Monday through Friday from 8am to 3pm. We will provide transportation for our seniors and disabled persons 18 and over. The seating will be limited on the 14-passenger van to 1 wheelchair and 4 passengers plus your driver. The Town of Columbia has a Ford Escape SUV 2020 for medical transportation. The medical car will also only allow for 2 people plus the driver to insure proper distancing.

If you have a medical appointment or would like to go food shopping please call the senior center to book your rides. Please call Lisa or Margaret at 860-228-0759 ext. 2 only. I am sure we will be filling up fast due to limited space on the van. To ensure the safety of you and our drivers the following rules will need to be followed:

1. You and your caretaker must always wear a mask during your ride.
2. We will be using a scanner to check your temperature. If you are running a fever of over 100 degrees, we will not be able to transport you.
3. After each round trip per person the driver will wipe down all surfaces of the van to properly sanitize.
4. If you are feeling sick on the day of your ride please contact our office as soon as possible to reschedule.
5. Sanitizer and gloves will be available on the van.

TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION

BECKISH SENIOR CENTER CONTINUED

BEWARE OF SCAMS

Key Bank Phone Calls: If you receive a call from someone saying they are from Key Bank do not give them any information. You can call Key Bank yourself and ask them if they are trying to contact you.

2020 Medicare Card Scam: A new scam has arisen in 2020 where calls are being made to seniors about a new Medicare card. The callers ask you to provide them with the number on your current Medicare and may ask for additional personal info (social security number, address, etc.). There is no new Medicare card and Medicare will never call to ask for your info. DO NOT PROVIDE ANY INFORMATION.

COVID--19 Scam (Coronavirus): Criminals looking to make a buck are calling, emailing and advertising cures to prevent and /or stop COVID-19. These are fake. There is currently no cure for COVID.

Malware Related to COVID--19: The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issues information on a fake on-line Corona virus map that delivers a well-known malware. A malicious website pretending to be the live map for Corona virus COVID-19 Global Cases by Johns Hopkins University is circulating on the Internet waiting for unwitting Internet users to visit the website. Visiting the website infects the user with the AZORult trojan, an information stealing program which can ex-filtrate a variety of sensitive data. It is likely being spread via infected email attachments, malicious on-line advertisements, and social engineering. Furthermore, anyone searching the Internet for a Corona virus map could unwittingly navigate to this malicious website.

On May 13, 2021 Dr. Morgan, Podiatrist will be at the senior center by appointment only. He is here from 1-2:30 with appointments every 15 minutes. Please call the senior center to schedule your time. Dr. Morgan will be here every 10 weeks for your foot-care.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Bernadette Derring at 860-228-0759 ext 1.

Bernadette Derring
Director Senior Services & Transportation

TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION

BUILDING & LAND USE The information below is a supplement to the normally required information that is submitted on a permit application for generators: stand-alone (standby systems) & portable fueled with LP/Gas.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION TO BE SUBMITTED WITH PERMIT APPLICATIONS

1. The electrical permit **must include** the cost of the generator in the construction value.
2. The electrical and LP / Gas permit applications are to be submitted simultaneously.
3. The applicant shall include the following **required** documents when submitting the permit application(s):
 - a) Contractors licenses and certificates of insurance.
 - b) The type, make, and model of the transfer switch to be installed along with a cut/specification sheet.
 - c) The type, make, and model of the generator to be installed along with a cut/specification sheet and clearance requirements for the generator.
 - d) If an 'automatic transfer switch' is proposed to be installed, a load calculation is required in order to show compliance with the capacity and rating requirements of Section 705 of the 2017 National Electrical Code (NEC).
 - e) A wiring diagram to show, in detail, the location of the new equipment and the existing equipment, the transfer switch location (before main or after main), wiring sizes and method. Also note: if a whole house transfer switch is being proposed to be installed ahead of the current main disconnect, details on the grounding and bonding arrangement are to be provided.
 - f) If a permanent generator is being installed, a letter of proper operation is required for the final inspection and certificate of approval.
 - g) At meter: socket label "MULTIPLE SOURCES".
 - h) An accurate drawing/site plan showing the location of these components (generator & fuel tanks) in relation to the front, rear, and side yard property lines must accompany your permit application.

PLEASE NOTE: Columbia Zoning Regulations **require zoning approval for placement of both the generator unit and LP tanks, respectful of the zoning setback requirements.**

TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION

BUILDING & LAND USE CONTINUED *The Columbia Building Safety and Land Use Department is offering this handout as a representative of the typical information and/or questions that arise for a typical generator installation proposal. The Town assumes no responsibility for any errors, omissions that may be found or is missing from this handout. This is to be used as a supplement to the normally required information that is submitted on a permit application. The installer is required to follow all applicable codes and standards applicable to the installation. This handout cannot possibly cover all situations, set-ups, or configurations, nor is it intended too.*

Building & Land Use Department

Terri Lasota

860.228.0440

landuse@columbiact.org

INLAND WETLANDS & WATERCOURSES The Inland Wetlands & Watercourses has updated the application procedures and process, application for permit, and permit fees. You may obtain the documents at www.columbiact.org, or by calling the office at 860-228-0440. Please be reminded that any construction or repair of any structure IN or OVER Columbia Lake (such as a seawall or dock) also REQUIRES APPROVAL from Lake Management Advisory Commission and the Board of Selectmen prior to Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission approval.

FIRE MARSHAL This year, daylight savings runs from March 14 through November 7. These dates serve as a reminder to change the batteries in the smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) alarms in your home. Take this reminder as an opportunity to also check the condition of your alarms. If the alarm body has started to turn yellow in color, you will want to check the manufacture date on the label. If that date is over 7 years old or cannot be read, it is time to replace the entire alarm device.

Another very important part of maintaining your alarms is to push the test button on all of them once a month. This will ensure that the battery is good and that the alarm sounds. These electronic devices can fail, so it is essential to check them regularly.

Smoke and CO alarms save lives – please keep your devices in good condition and in working order. Free 9 volt batteries are available at the Columbia Volunteer Fire Department located at 167 Route 66 on Sundays between 10 am-12 pm. Limit 4 per household.

If you have any questions, please contact the Fire Marshal's Office in the Town of Columbia Building Department at 860-228-0440. Be safe, Michael Lester, Fire Marshal

TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION

SOCIAL SERVICES Energy Assistance Deadline Extended and Some Requirements Dropped!

Program Date Changes:

- Deliverable fuel deliveries extended to Thursday, May 20, 2021
- Last day for application intake for all households extended to Tuesday, June 15, 2021

Program Flexibilities:

- The liquid asset test is eliminated (Households previously denied due to liquid assets can have their applications re-determined.)
- Bank statements are no longer required unless being used to verify income
- Social Security/Pension proof is not required if the applicant was eligible for CEAP benefits within the last 2 years and verification had been provided

Income Eligibility: Household Size – includes homeowners and renters that pay separately for heat, and renters whose heat is included in the rent, as long as more than 30% of gross income is paid towards rent.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Up to \$37,645	Up to \$49,228	Up to \$60,811	Up to \$72,394	Up to \$83,977	Up to \$95,560	Up to \$97,732	Up to \$99,904

To schedule an appointment to apply, reapply, or verify that you are receiving your full benefit, contact ACCESS Agency at:

ACCESS Energy Department

Phone: 860-450-7487 (Willimantic)

Email: shirley.riemann@accessagency.or

Or, download an application here: <https://portal.ct.gov/DSS/Economic-Security/Winter-Heating-Assistance/Energy-Assistance---Winter-Heating/Apply>

Have questions? Or having difficulty getting through to ACCESS? Contact Katie Wilt, Social Services Coordinator, at 860-228-1008.

TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION

SOCIAL SERVICES CONTINUED. Funding Available to Cover Employment Training & Childcare for SNAP Users



If you are receiving SNAP in Connecticut and not receiving money from the Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) program, you may be eligible to participate in SNAP E&T. E&T is a skills-based program that provides short-term vocational programs at community colleges and community-based organizations.

Visit: <https://portal.ct.gov/DSS/SNAP/SNAP-Employment-and-Training>

Seniors and SNAP

End Hunger CT supports all CT with residents with food needs. They are currently outreaching to seniors to assist in enrollment to SNAP by encouraging seniors to call toll-free 1 (866) 974-7627 or email EHC! at SNAP@endhungerct.org for an appointment.



Please note, if you choose to call the SNAP hotline, you will have to leave a voicemail with your name and number and one of our Call Center Associates will return the call as soon as possible. Please also state in your call or email that you are requesting an older adult appointment.

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TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION

SOCIAL SERVICES CONTINUED REACH OUT CT 1-844-TALK-4CT: Reach Out CT is a free support line staffed by compassionate listeners who want to listen and help. We are here to offer free emotional support and guide you towards connections to therapy and other resources.

This line is available:

Monday - Thursday 8:30AM - 7:00PM

Friday 8:30AM - 6:00PM

Saturday - Sunday 11:00AM - 7:00PM

Ways to get help

- 1. Call our helpline** at 1-844-TALK-4CT and talk live with one of our call specialists.
- 2. [Enroll in GoMo](#)**, our text program that allows you to receive texts every other day for inspiration, motivation and mental health to help you stay grounded during these uncertain times.
- 3. [Enroll in GoMo](#)** to access our chat services so you can text with one of our Reach Out CT call specialists during our service hours in real time.

Who can call? Everyone.

You can call if you're feeling isolated and/or lonely during Covid-19; you're experiencing general feelings of stress, worry, anxiety, sadness or frustration; you need guidance on how to access mental and physical health care; or you need connections to basic needs resources such as free food or infant/child supplies.

Most people have called to talk out their feelings, for general consolation and emotional support, and to ask for connections to infant supplies, feminine hygiene products and more. We will not judge--we all need someone to talk to.

Reach Out CT supports the Black Lives Matter movement and encourages anyone to call Reach Out CT if you are feeling upset or unsupported amidst recent social injustices in our nation. We are here to provide a safe space for listening, learning and comfort. Additionally, if you have any questions surrounding race or identity and you want to learn more, please call us to talk out your feelings. We want to help provide you with resources for self-education.

TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION

SOCIAL SERVICES CONTINUED **Is it free? Yes, this service is really free.** It is available seven days a week. You do not need health insurance of any kind, and you can call back as often as you like. This number is toll-free and you will not be charged or invoiced by Reach Out CT in any way. There is no guarantee that you will get to speak with the same call specialist every time you call. Reach Out CT is not a counseling service.

Reach Out CT is not for crisis calls or emergency calls. Connecticut residents should continue to utilize 211 and/or 911 for those calls. Families or individuals are more than welcome to call our support line if they have questions.

THE CT VACCINE APPOINTMENT FINDER IS NEW AND IMPROVED!

You can now filter searches by “reported availability” and view which vaccines sites are utilizing. Other filter options include address, healthcare network, non-drive thru, and phone scheduling.

The site is updated throughout the day so keep checking!

<https://covidvaccinefinder.ct.gov/?query=06237>

Please contact me with any questions regarding the above programs. Do not hesitate to reach out for referrals to appropriate programs/services, questions about eligibility, or to talk with a social worker.

Take good care,

Katie Wilt, Town of Columbia Community Social Services Coordinator, at 860.228.1008 or kwilt@columbiact.org. (Typical office hours: Monday & Tuesday, 8:30 am-5:00 pm)

SOCIAL SERVICES CONTINUED



UniteCT

EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE FOR CONNECTICUT'S ECONOMY

Have you been financially impacted by COVID-19?



Are you struggling to pay your rent and utilities?

Apply for UniteCT, a rental assistance program supporting CT residents who earn up to **80% of the HUD Area Median Income** and their landlords.

You may qualify for the opportunity to receive...

- ✓ **Missed electric outstanding payments**
- ✓ **Missed rent or future rent payments**

To learn more and see if you qualify, visit:



www.bit.ly/UniteCT

scan QR code:



TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION

RECREATION DEPARTMENT Please note that the Parks and Recreation Department is now located at the Murphy House at Columbia Lake. Follow us on [FaceBook](#) and [Instagram](#)!

UPCOMING EVENTS: REGISTRATION FOR PROGRAMS [ONLINE AT RECDESK](#).

BOAT MOORINGS: The Town of Columbia will hold its annual Boat Mooring Lottery at the Board of Selectmen meeting scheduled for **Tuesday, April 20, 2021 at 7:00 PM** via Zoom (login will be available in the [website calendar](#) under Board of Selectmen Meeting). The purpose of the lottery is twofold. First, it establishes eligibility to rent a mooring (since there are usually more applicants than available moorings). Second, it establishes the order in which residents will choose the location of their boat mooring. Generally, a resident that fares well in the lottery will choose a mooring closer to shore. Any resident wishing to enter the lottery should submit the following information to Town Administration: name, address, phone number, boat type, make, length and motor size. The information may be delivered via email to recdirector@columbiact.org or by postal service or walk-in. Those awarded a mooring will be notified and will be required to supply proof of residency, boat registration information (excluding kayaks/canoes/sailboats), a Safe Boating Certificate, and a non-refundable fee of \$100.00. The Town of Columbia limits motor size on Columbia Lake to 80 horsepower for outboard engines and 150 horsepower for inboard engines. For more information, please contact Marc at (860)-228-8513.

BOAT LAUNCH GATE KEYS: Boat Launch Gate keys can be purchased on-line at Program: Boat Launch Gate Key Application (recdesk.com), or submit the application (located under [Forms and Permits](#)) via mail or drop box located in front of Yeomans Hall. If mailing please send to Town of Columbia, Attn: Marc Volza, 323 Route 87, Columbia, CT 06237. Once registered on-line, or your application is submitted, you will be contacted to set a time to come pick up your key.

EXERCISE PROGRAMS held at Yeoman's Hall.

Fit Fusion: Mon/Weds 4:30-5:30pm, Yeomans Hall

Yoga: Thursday 6pm to 7pm, Yeomans Hall

For all exercise classes we have a max capacity of 12 people per a class. Due to this we are asking those who wish to attend to email ahead to reserve a spot recdirector@columbiact.org. Walk-ins will be accepted if the class is not already at capacity.

TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION

RECREATION DEPARTMENT CONTINUED

COMMUNITY GARDEN: The Columbia Community Garden is located on Szegda Road offering a secure, sun filled, fenced area with water on-site for each plot. With the 2019 expansion of the fenced area, there are now new plots of varying sizes for rent through the Columbia Recreation Dept. Plot sizes: 10x20-\$15. 15x20-\$20. 20x20-\$25. 25x20-\$30.

Contact the Rec. Department at (860) 228-8513 or email to recreation@columbiact.org for more information or use sign-up through [Rec Desk](#).



Columbia Parks & Recreation

APRIL VACATION CAMP

MONDAY APRIL 19TH – FRIDAY APRIL 23RD
8 AM – 4 PM
MUST SIGN UP BEFORE APRIL 5TH

\$110 FOR WEEK
(Covid precautions will be in place)

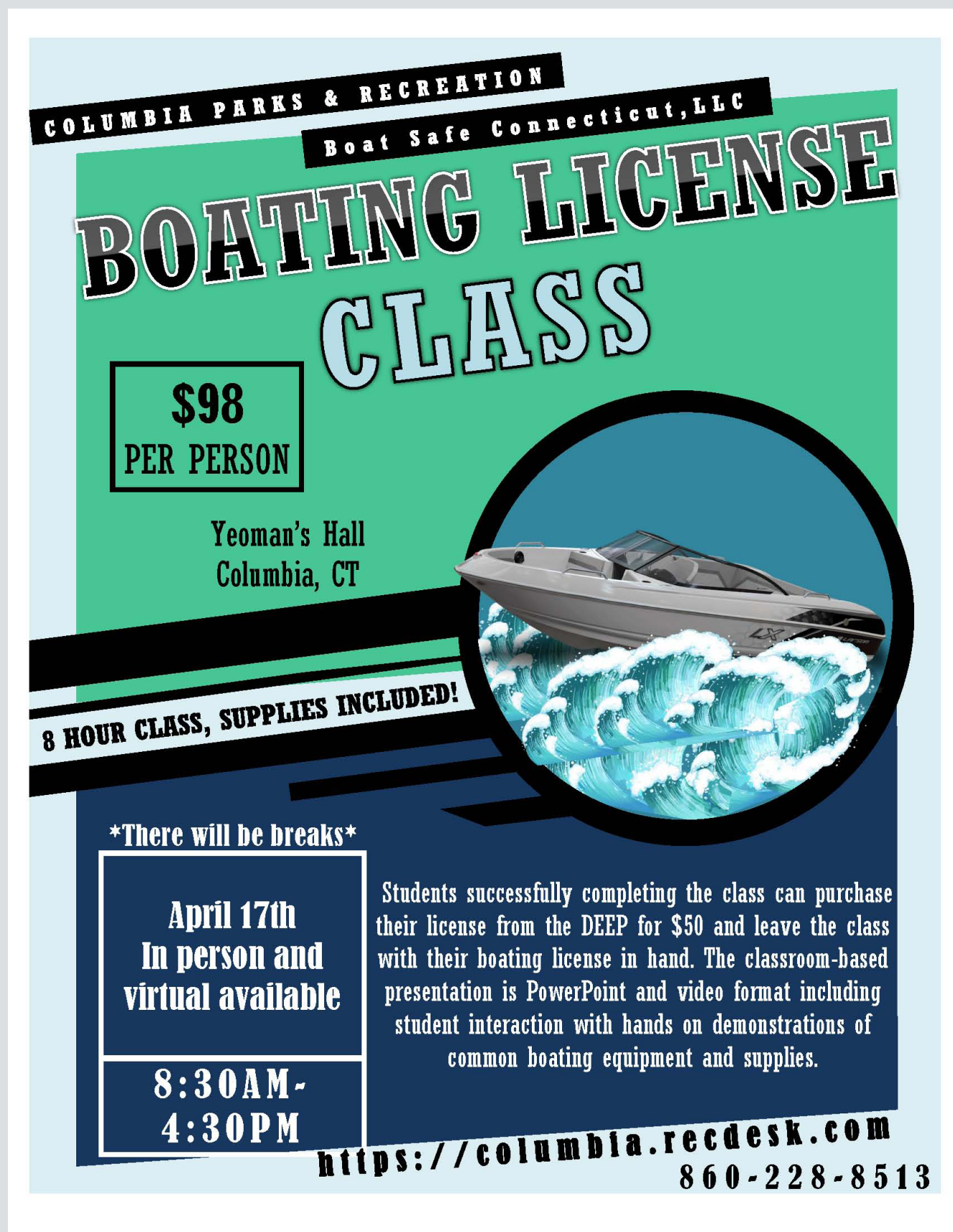
Pack a lunch & a snack!

We'll hang out in the gym and play games, do arts & crafts and go outside if possible!

860-228-8513 **[HTTPS://COLUMBIA.RECDESK.COM](https://columbia.recdesk.com)**

TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION

RECREATION DEPARTMENT CONTINUED BOAT LICENSING COURSE: Students successfully completing the class can purchase their license from the DEEP for \$50 and leave the class with their boating license in hand. The classroom-based presentation is PowerPoint and video format including student interaction with hands on demonstrations of common boating equipment and supplies. this class will be remote via zoom. To register please go to [Rec Desk](#).



COLUMBIA PARKS & RECREATION
Boat Safe Connecticut, LLC

BOATING LICENSE CLASS

\$98 PER PERSON

Yeoman's Hall
Columbia, CT

8 HOUR CLASS, SUPPLIES INCLUDED!


There will be breaks

April 17th
In person and virtual available

8:30AM - 4:30PM

Students successfully completing the class can purchase their license from the DEEP for \$50 and leave the class with their boating license in hand. The classroom-based presentation is PowerPoint and video format including student interaction with hands on demonstrations of common boating equipment and supplies.

<https://columbia.recdesk.com>
860-228-8513



TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION

TAX OFFICE Due to COVID-19 the Town Hall is currently open by appointment only. Please call the tax office to schedule an appointment at 860-228-0230.

ATTENTION TAXPAYERS: APRIL 1, 2021 IS THE LAST DAY TO PAY THE JAN 1, 2021 TAXES WITHOUT A PENALTY. THIS IS IN ACCORDANCE WITH GOVERNOR LAMONT'S EXECUTIVE ORDER 9R.

TAX OFFICE HOURS DURING MARCH AND APRIL 1, 2021:

- MONDAY- WEDNESDAY FROM 8:00 TO 2:00
- THURSDAY FROM 10:00 TO 6:00
- FRIDAY-CLOSED

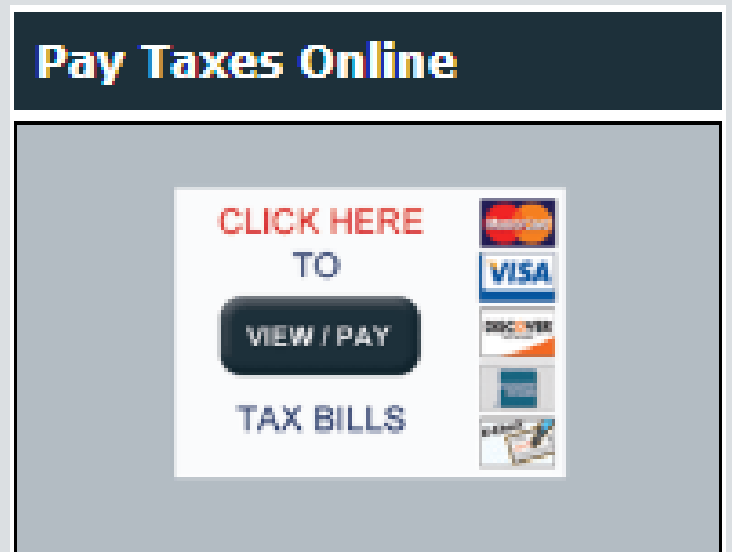
Payments may be made: By mail to: Town of Columbia, Dept #347, PO Box 150512, Hartford, CT 06115-0512. The postmark of April 1, 2021 is acceptable as an on-time payment. The postmark of April 2nd is late and interest is charged at 1.5% per month from the due date of January 1, 2021 (6. %). Put your payment in a drop box at the Town Hall BEFORE 6:00PM April 1, 2021. Payments put in the drop box after 6:00PM April 1, 2021 will accrue interest of 6.%. Or pay [on-line](#) (\$.95 to use a bank account 2.95% to use credit or debit cards).

Please call the tax office at 860-228-0230 with questions.

Carol Price, Tax Collector

TOWN CLERKS OFFICE Due to the continuing Corona virus pandemic, the need for social distancing and to limit the number of people in Town Hall, the following options will be in place with regards to how to purchase your transfer station sticker and license your dog.

TRANSFER STATION PERMIT STICKERS: Transfer station permit stickers for 2021 will be available for purchase at a date to be announced in early May 2021. This year, to purchase a transfer station sticker, please go ONLINE to [Rec Desk](#) or MAIL us your application at Town of Columbia, Attn: Town Clerk, 323 Route 87, Columbia, CT 06237, or use the DROP BOX. Be on the lookout for a mailer later in April with more information.



TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION

TOWN CLERKS OFFICE CONTINUED DOG LICENSING: June is dog licensing month. Registration of dogs will be handled BY MAIL or by using of the DROP BOX. More information on registering your dog will be included in the May 2021 Town Administrators Newsletter.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call us at 860-228-3284, or reach out to us by email – Robin (townclerk@columbiact.org) or Gail (atownclerk@columbiact.org).



Mono Pond Spring

Photo Credit Paul Ramsey

NON-MUNICIPAL SERVICES PROVIDERS AND NON-PROFIT NEWS AND INFORMATION

SAXTON B. LITTLE LIBRARY *LIBRARY UPDATE APRIL*

The Saxton B. Little Library is happy to announce that we are returning to Limited Browsing and Curbside service. We are also actively monitoring opening requirements and seeking ways to expand Library access. In the meanwhile, please remember that materials remain available for pick up 6 days a week.

For those who wish to browse at the Library, we remind you:

- Only new and display materials are available to browse at this time, our full collection is available upon request.
- Our children's room and rest rooms are not accessible to the public.
- If you are not feeling well, please use curbside pick up.
- Masks and 6-ft distancing is required.
- If we have greater volume than our space can manage, we may ask you to wait outside until another patron leaves.
- Hand sanitizer is located at our entrance and throughout our space.

Browsing Hours are as follows:

- Tuesday 2-4 / 5-7
- Wednesday 11-1 / 4-7
- Saturday 2-4

Curbside pick up hours are as follows:

- Monday 2-4
- Thursday 11-7:30
- Friday 10-2
- Saturday 11-1

Electronic materials are available 24/7.

Programming continues to be available via Zoom and Children's take and Make kits are available for pick up. Baby Bees meets via Zoom every Friday. Story times are available virtually on-line any time. Stitcher group meets weekly at 2:30 on Wednesdays. Writers meets the second Monday at 2:30 and last Wednesday of the month at 6:30.

NON-MUNICIPAL SERVICES PROVIDERS AND NON-PROFIT NEWS AND INFORMATION

SAXTON B. LITTLE LIBRARY CONTINUED Don't forget, we also offer grab bags, Tailored Titles (a selection chosen with your likes/dislikes in mind), and Personal Selection via Zoom. Instructions for searching the catalog, how to browse library shelves from home, and more are available on our website under catalog tutorials (<https://www.columbiactlibrary.org/catalog-tutorials/>).

Visit our website at: www.columbiactlibrary.org. Call us: (860) 228-0350 or email: SBL@columbiactlibrary.org

Stay safe, we look forward to seeing you!

Sue Epstein, Library Director

COMINGS AND GOINGS

FROM THE INLAND WETLANDS & WATERCOURSES COMMISSION MEMBERS AND STAFF: We all would like to send John Valente best wishes for a very happy retirement. John's guidance and encouragement has helped Commission Members and coworkers, and we all have been so fortunate to have his expertise to rely on. John will be missed, but I know his retirement is the right thing at this time. May all your travels be adventurous, thrilling, and exhilarating! Happy Retirement John and may the next phase of your life bring you all that you seek and more.

On behalf of the Commission Members and the Staff, we would like to extend our warmest welcome and good wishes to Bill Ross who will be taking John's place and served as a Commission Member for several years. We are all happy and excited about his inputs, foresights, and contributions to the Town. Welcome aboard Bill!



NON-MUNICIPAL SERVICES PROVIDERS AND NON-PROFIT NEWS AND INFORMATION

COLUMBIA VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT The Columbia Volunteer Fire Department continues to be an integral part of the Columbia community and though the pandemic has dampened our efforts to have community members in the firehouse for events, we have offered free 9-volt batteries on two Sundays this month as a drive-in service and are maintaining an active Facebook page to help share important information. The Columbia Volunteer Fire Department has responded to more than 140 calls since January 1, 2021.

In this month's newsletter, the Department is proud to share profiles of two members – both written by the members themselves.

Lieutenant Jerry James

Once upon a time, there was a little boy who dreamed of playing baseball in the major leagues with all the neighborhood kids. This dream came to an end when an unfortunate “take-out slide” at second base went wrong and was poorly executed one afternoon. So, a different dream needed to take shape...and at that moment, a dark-haired girl named Linda came into my life along with her younger brother (who wanted to become a fireman).

This started the 46-year (so far) career in the Columbia Volunteer Fire Department when Jim Jensen and I joined the department together to get our feet wet helping out the Town of Columbia residents when the worst times of their lives came about. It was March of 1976 when we both joined the “group of old geezers” who sat on the front of the firetrucks and watched the traffic drive by the 166 Route 66 fire station. Little did we know that someday both of us would advance up the chain of command in both our firefighter lives; Jim in the Willimantic Fire Department, leaving Columbia in 1978 and attaining the rank of Captain and me in the CVFD attaining the rank of Chief.



COLUMBIA VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT CONTINUED All the training, responding to calls, taking words of advice, doing the grunt work (sweeping the floors, emptying the garbage, shoveling the snow) all paid off in 1991 when I was elected to six 2-year terms of Fire Chief. During this time, I chaired the building committee that successfully constructed (within budget) the current firehouse. Along the way, fire training classes and EMS medical training led to appointments by previous Chiefs of the CVFD to the positions of Engineer, Lieutenant, Captain and election of Deputy Chief under Chief Lou Scotti. While doing these duties on the operational side of the department, I also helped the business side of the CVFD by being treasurer, fill-in secretary, and vice-president who handled recruitment and membership. All this time, volunteering whenever available, has been part of my life in the Town of Columbia. Be it coaching my children in their athletic activities or keeping the financial books of the now defunct Columbia Recreation Council, spraying water during the winter on the old hockey rink at the Recreation field or Jerry Dunnack's pond. Helping in any way possible has been the theme throughout my "career" in town, first at home, then wherever needed!

Captain Joel Duffy

I moved to Columbia in 1999 with my wife, Megan, and our son, Bryan. In 2005, Megan and I joined the CVFD after watching some difficult rescues during Hurricane Katrina. We wanted to help our community. After our initial training, we both obtained our EMT certifications then I continued on to Firefighter 1, Firefighter 2, and Fire Instructor 1. During this time, we were trading off training schedules since we had our seven-year-old son at home. In too short of time, Bryan grew up and is now an active EMT and Firefighter in the Columbia Volunteer Fire Department.

In addition to our volunteer work in Columbia, as a family we volunteer for the National Park Service at the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River as Swiftwater rescuers. Professionally, I am a computer network engineer for the University of Hartford. I enjoy making a difference in our community and helping those in need of our services. The members of our department train hard twice a week for many hours to be ready for the call when it comes.

I am proud to be a part of my fire department family. I cannot say enough about the professionals that we have volunteering for the Columbia Volunteer Fire Department.



COLUMBIA VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT CONTINUED

REFLECTIVE ADDRESS MARKERS: Community members can help the volunteers who respond to calls by clearly marking your house number in a visible manner on the street. The CVFD makes and sells reflective house number signs that help us quickly and easily identify your house; this often saves precious time. To order the Reflective Address Markers please go to the Columbia Volunteer Fire Department's web-page at www.columbiafire5.org and download the printable form or you can fill out the electronic form on-line. The price is \$10.00 per sign or \$12.00 with mounting brackets.

2021 FRED GIFFORD MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP: The Scholarship consists of four (4) individual awards of \$1,000.00, given to two (2) young men and two (2) young women. All applicants must be legal residents of Columbia, CT, seniors attending secondary school or home schooled, with plans to continue their education at an accredited postsecondary school or institution. The Scholarship Committee will be looking for students with a good balance of strong grades, involvement in school activities and outside of school activities, community service and family values.

Applications must be submitted to the address above or email (mlester@columbiafire5.org) **no later than April 2, 2021.**

[Click Here to Download 2021 Application](#)

Print "Attention Mike Lester" on all correspondence. Winners may be asked to attend a membership meeting of the Columbia Volunteer Fire Department, Inc.

QUESTIONS? PLEASE CONTACT MIKE LESTER @ 860-465-6162 OR MLESTER@COLUMBIAFIRE5.ORG

These Scholarships are made possible by the generosity of the people and businesses throughout our area.

This Scholarship is administered by the Columbia Volunteer Fire Department, Inc.

COLUMBIA VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT INC.

167 ROUTE 66/P.O. BOX 26, COLUMBIA, CT 06237

860-228-9602

NON-MUNICIPAL SERVICES PROVIDERS AND NON-PROFIT NEWS AND INFORMATION

AHM YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES The AHM Youth and Family Services Board of Directors sends best wishes to the residents of Columbia. As a public charity serving your community, our call to action since day one of the pandemic is that: "we are here for you". The AHM board, staff, and volunteers are committed to helping local residents navigate these incredibly challenging times through access to Mental Health, Prevention, Youth and Family Development, and Juvenile Justice Programs.



The following is a sample of some upcoming programs that as residents, you can access:

- For senior citizens, to schedule youth workers to assist with home projects through the TASKs program, or for families to schedule an appointment for Child, Youth and Family counseling call the AHM offices at 860-228-9488.
- For teens, young adults, and families to attend the SMART Recovery Groups visit www.ahmyouth.org for the schedule or call 860-228-9488.
- For young families, AHM's Family Resource Center, (FRC) will be offering Play and Learn groups at Veteran's Park in Hebron-Thursdays Starting 4/29- 6 sessions \$25 for the 6 week session, (10:30-11:30 on Thursdays, 4/29, 5/6, 5/13, 5/20, 5/27 and 6/3). Rain Dates will be Fridays at the same time. The FRC will also be hosting First Steps in Music at Burnt Hill Park-Tuesdays, starting 5/4 -4 sessions \$60 per family for the 4 weeks from 10:45-11:30 on Tuesdays, 5/4, 4/11, 5/18, 5/25. Rain Dates will be 6/1 and 6/8. FRC Play and Learn groups will be at Gilead Hill School-Wednesdays, 6 sessions starting 4/28 \$25 for the 6 sessions from 10:15-11:15 on 4/28, 5/5, 5/12, 5/19, 5/26, and 6/2. The 2021-2021 KinderRHAMa preschool registration will open to on March 29th at 10am.
- Check our website for details about our spring youth theater for grades K-6, and our summer youth theater for grades 7-12.
- AHM staff are planning an in-person preschool summer camp and in-person Health Matters programs so be sure to check out our website for updates: www.ahmyouth.org.

NON-MUNICIPAL SERVICES PROVIDERS AND NON-PROFIT NEWS AND INFORMATION

AHM YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES CONTINUED

COLUMBIA TASKS PROGRAM

We want to help you this Spring!

Do you need yardwork done this Spring? Are you registered for the TASKS program?

If so, call AHM at 860-228-9488 to have Brendan Grimm set up help for you. Only outside work is permitted at this time, due to COVID-19.

If you are not registered, Contact Bernadette Derring at Beckish Senior Center.



If you are interested in registering for the TASKs Program, or if you have any questions or concerns, please contact Bernadette Derring, the Columbia Senior Services Director at 860-228-0759 or at bderring@columbiact.org

NON-MUNICIPAL SERVICES PROVIDERS AND
NON-PROFIT
NEWS AND INFORMATION

Join us on Facebook: Horace W Porter
PTO and Parent Community

MOTHER'S
Day

April 30, 2021 @ 6:30pm

Free PTO Online Event
Painted Rock Photo Holder

Register by emailing
horaceporterpto@gmail.com

NON-MUNICIPAL SERVICES PROVIDERS AND NON-PROFIT NEWS AND INFORMATION

UCONN EXTENSION - TOLLAND COUNTY OFFICE LOCAL FARM GUIDE Check out the recent [guide](#) put together by the UConn Extension – Tolland County office promoting local small family farm businesses that are important to our communities and economies.

The guide is intended to be used as a gift guide, but is also a place where people can reference where to get local food throughout the winter months.

COLUMBIA LIONS

Saturday, April 10, 2021 - COLUMBIA LIONS CLUB FUNDRAISER BREAKFAST

Please come and support the annual Columbia Lion 's Club Fundraiser Breakfast on Saturday, April 10 from 7:00-11:00AM, at the Beckish Senior Center, 188 Route 66, Columbia, CT. This years breakfast consists of Egg Sandwiches (plain, cheese and or sausage), Hashbrowns and Coffee to go.

MENU

\$6:Sandwich (egg, cheese, sausage)

\$8:Sandwich, hashbrown, coffee

\$15: 2 sandwiches, 2 hashbrowns, 2 coffees

CASH ONLY PLEASE

This is a drive through/take out event. We hope you can support this event. For more information, contact Chairman Matt Sternat at msternat@charter.net.

NON-MUNICIPAL SERVICES PROVIDERS AND NON-PROFIT NEWS AND INFORMATION

COLUMBIA LIONS MEMBERSHIP DRIVE Are you eager to serve the Columbia community?

- Would you like to help support the Columbia Food Pantry, the Town of Columbia's fuel fund, the Saxton B. Little Library, our scouting programs, and our neighbors in need?
- Would you like to experience the pride and satisfaction of community involvement that comes from hosting the annual 4th of July Parade, the Christmas Gazebo Lighting on the Town Green, and the annual Chicken Barbecue and Pancake Breakfast?
- Would you like to work with the Columbia Lions to respond to the urgent needs of others and build a community that is spirited, tolerant, and kind?

If so, you can realize your potential to make a difference by becoming a Columbia Lion.

Men and women over 18 years of age can become Lions by contacting Membership Chairman Brendan Keenan at 860-228-1854 or at columbia.Lions.Membership@gmail.com. Call today!

The Columbia Lions, in compliance with COVID protocols, currently meet by Zoom. Meetings are held on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month starting in late September and going through the first week in June. Ask our Membership Chairman, Brendan Keenan, about how you can attend one of our meetings and study up close just what we do.

NON-MUNICIPAL SERVICES PROVIDERS AND NON-PROFIT NEWS AND INFORMATION

UR COMMUNITY CARES

Columbia Residents: Free Help at Home

For residents
age 70+ or
age 18+
with physical
disabilities

- Household chores
- Yard work
- Companionship
- Transportation

Local volunteers
needed age 15* and up
(*ages 15-17
require adult consent
and supervision)

Sign up now at:
www.URCommunityCares.org
A new community connection from
Columbia Cares

All participants background-checked



Joanne Prague Doyle, Hometown Hero
860-337-0196
lakehse1@gmail.com
Michelle Puzzo, President
info@URCommunityCares.org

NON-MUNICIPAL SERVICES PROVIDERS AND NON-PROFIT NEWS AND INFORMATION

UR COMMUNITY CARES CONTINUED

Household Tasks

- Wash inside windows
- Dust
- Wash, fold, put away laundry
- Iron, mend clothes
- Clean, organize living area
- Sweep, vacuum, mop floors
- Change linens, make bed
- Clean bedroom
- Clean kitchen surfaces, appliances
- Clean refrigerator
- Wash/put away dishes
- Prepare meal, cook, clean up
- Water indoor plants, maintain plants
- Pet care, walk pets
- Bag up trash, de-clutter
- Organize cabinets, closets, drawers

Yard Work

- Water plants, tend to gardens
- Mow lawn
- Rake leaves, clean up yard
- Trash
- Bring in mail, papers

Companionship

- Play board games, cards
- Socialization
- Share music, play Instruments
- Coach technology use

Local Transportation

- Medical appointments
- Shopping trips, errands in town

Visit www.URCommunityCares.org
for a full list of services.

Special requests will be considered.

About UR Community Cares, the online platform for free home-based assistance

- **Our mission:** To connect people who need at-home help with those who want to help, town by town.
- **Our model:** We provide a secure digital platform with free access for all enrolled participants at URCommunityCares.org.
- **Who we help:** Community members age 70+ or age 18+ with a permanent or temporary physical disability.
- **Who helps us:** Volunteers contribute their time on a monthly or weekly basis. Local agencies refer and enroll residents in need of free home-based support.
- **What supports us:** Municipal funding, grant awards, sponsorships and donations from individuals and organizations.
- **What funds are used for:** Annual background checks for the safety of all participants, top-tier website security and updates, insurance (including transportation) and COVID-compliant supplies.

We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and 100% volunteer-based.

BOARDS & COMMISSION NEWS AND INFORMATION

OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

The Catalytic Impact of Open Space and Hiking Trails

Great things are happening in Columbia with new opportunities for hiking and trail biking coming to the Mono Pond State Recreation Area, the Airline Trail, and to new open space in Wells Woods. The benefits of these new opportunities can be seen in what is called the "Triple Bottom Line".

The first bottom line is financial. Open space for hiking, bird watching, or biking attracts potential home buyers and increases land values, especially when there is easy access to open space: Sales brochures in Columbia advertise the availability of open space, and studies have shown the positive correlation of land values to passive recreation. A recent Florida study found that access to bike and walking paths was a top consideration for home buyers. Outdoor recreation is popular. Additionally, open space also uses fewer town services than developments, saving tax dollars.

The second bottom line is personal well-being. It is well known that exercise improves our physical and emotional health. Walking or biking helps you feel stronger and more fit, helps you lose weight, sleep better, and experience improvements in mood, mental alertness, and energy. The probability of engaging in these activities increases with the availability of parks and trails. Especially during the corona virus, outdoor recreation has enabled socialization and a welcome diversion from being at home.

The third bottom line is the environment. Open space protects plants, animals, and the watershed of the local area and impacts global air quality and drinking water. Forests reduce greenhouse gases and slow global warming, now a national priority.

So, what does the Triple Bottom Line say about the financial, personal, and global benefits of open space? It is a win-win for Columbia residents, and it will attract people to our great little town for generations to come.