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LEBO BEAT

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In the Face of Unimaginable Tragedy, Mt. Lebanon Shows Its Heart

As our community grieves, the compassion and kindness of neighbors offer comfort during an extraordinarily difficult time *By Brion Palmer*

I thought long and hard about how to acknowledge the tragedy involving the Lynch family in the pages of LEBO BEAT. As a neighbor, husband and father, I struggled to find the right words. What follows comes from my heart.

— Brion Palmer,
publisher and co-owner, LEBO BEAT

There are constant reminders of what makes Mt. Lebanon such a special place to call home.

Our outstanding schools, vibrant business districts, beautiful neighborhoods, parks and traditions all contribute to the quality of life we enjoy. But beyond everything that makes our community attractive, there is something far more important that truly defines Mt. Lebanon.

The people.

And sometimes it takes the most difficult circumstances imaginable to remind us just how much that matters.

Our community recently experienced an unimaginable tragedy that has left families, friends, neighbors and residents struggling with grief, sadness and questions that may never have answers.

The heartbreak extends far beyond those who personally knew the family. It has touched parents who hugged their children a little tighter, teachers who care deeply about their students, neighbors searching for the right words and countless residents struggling to comprehend such a devastating loss.

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A Light of Hope in a Time of Grief



Holiday lights displayed at Beverly Heights Presbyterian Church and throughout Mt. Lebanon symbolize the community's compassion and support for the Lynch family as neighbors come together in a time of unimaginable grief. (Lebo Beat photo)

Don't miss a BEAT

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Your Taxes Could Change in 2027. Here's Why

Mt. Lebanon proposes replacing its stormwater fee with a higher earned income tax, a change that would affect households differently depending on income *By Brion Palmer*

Mt. Lebanon residents could see a change in how they pay for stormwater management in 2027, with a proposed increase in the municipal earned income tax replacing the annual stormwater fee.

The proposal, included in the municipality's recommended 2027 budget, would raise the municipal earned income tax rate from 0.8% to 1%, an increase of 0.2 percentage points. In exchange, the annual stormwater fee, projected to reach $153.72 per household next year, would be eliminated.

The change follows a Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruling that has affected how municipalities can collect stormwater fees from tax-exempt organizations, including schools, hospitals and churches.

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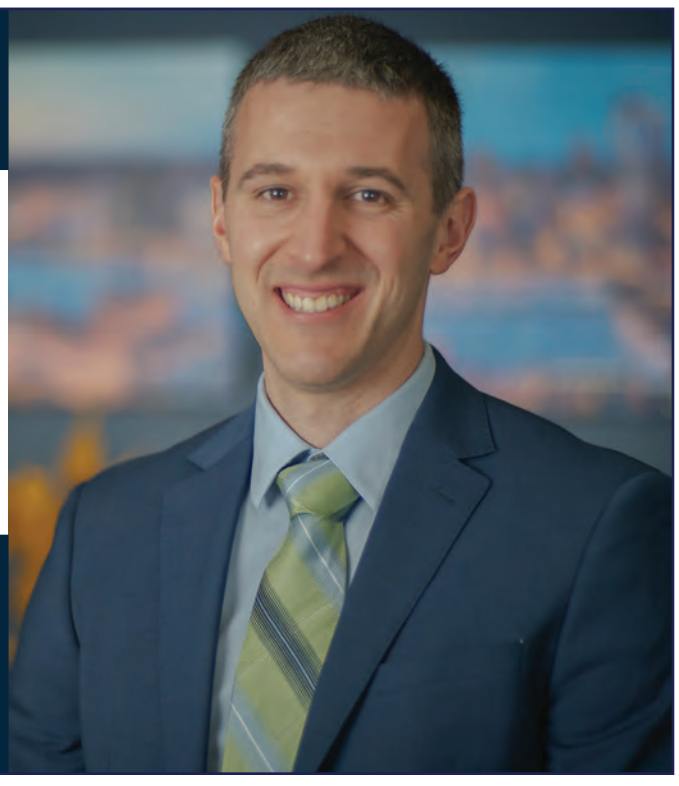
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News Briefs

Holiday Bells, Mallets & Drums Returns Dec. 11-12

One of Mt. Lebanon's favorite holiday traditions returns Dec. 11-12 as the Mt. Lebanon School District presents its 30th annual Holiday Bells, Mallets & Drums concert series.

The performances showcase the talents of student musicians and highlight the district's nationally recognized percussion program. For three decades, the concerts have brought families and community members together to celebrate the holiday season through music.

Tickets are selling quickly, and residents are encouraged to purchase them in advance.



Members of the Mt. Lebanon High School percussion program perform during last year's Holiday Bells, Mallets & Drums concert. (Photo provided)

Mt. Lebanon High School Orchestra Celebrates 100 Years

The Mt. Lebanon High School Orchestra will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2027, marking a century of musical excellence, memorable performances and generations of talented student musicians.

Founded in 1927, the orchestra has built a distinguished legacy through the dedication of students and educators, including performances on some of the nation's most celebrated stages.

A special centennial concert is scheduled for March 2, 2027.

As part of the celebration, the orchestra is inviting current students, alumni and former members to share favorite memories and photographs for possible features on its Instagram account.

Residents can explore the orchestra's history, learn more about the centennial celebration and submit memories at mtle.bo/Orchestra100.

Noah's Halloween Haunt Raises $285 for Cancer Research

Mt. Lebanon teen turns his love of Halloween into a four-year fundraising tradition inspired by personal loss.

For the fourth consecutive year, Mt. Lebanon teenager Noah Westreich transformed his family's yard into a haunted attraction for Halloween to raise money for the American Cancer Society.

On Oct. 31, visitors explored the elaborate display along Cedar Boulevard, featuring animatronics, spooky decorations, fog machines and a full cemetery scene. The attraction was open from 5:30 to 9 p.m., with candy for visitors and free admission. Donations were encouraged through a QR code linking directly to the American Cancer Society.

This year's event raised $285.

For Noah, the project is about more than Halloween. Having lost both grandparents and a family dog to cancer, he hopes his fundraising efforts will help prevent other families from experiencing similar losses.

Noah started the attraction at age 12 and has expanded it each year, purchasing decorations and equipment with money earned from several jobs.

His dedication has also drawn media attention. During the fundraiser's second year, KDKA-TV covered his efforts, and a Los Angeles radio station featured the project and made a donation.



Noah Westreich's Halloween Yard Scare transforms his Mt. Lebanon home into a spooky attraction, raising money for the American Cancer Society. (Photo provided)

Despite disappointing donations last year, Noah remained committed to continuing the tradition.

Now in its fourth year, his Halloween Yard Scare combines creativity, hard work and a personal mission to help fight cancer.

Wegmans Coming to Galleria of Mt. Lebanon

Wegmans Food Markets is coming to the Galleria of Mt. Lebanon, bringing a major new grocery destination to the South Hills as part of a planned redevelopment of the longtime shopping center.

Wegmans and Roadside Development announced Oct. 29 that the supermarket chain will anchor the renovated Galleria with a store of about 110,000 square feet, featuring fresh produce, seafood, meats, a bakery, deli, specialty cheeses, prepared foods and beer and wine selections.

The Galleria, originally a Kaufmann's department store before its conversion into a shopping center in 1988, will undergo significant renovations beginning in 2028. Developers say the project will preserve the property's retail character, with existing retailers remaining open during construction.

The Mt. Lebanon location will be Wegmans' second store in the Pittsburgh region. Its first, currently under construction in Cranberry Township, is expected to open in fall 2027.

Mt. Lebanon Municipal Manager Keith McGill called the redevelopment a significant milestone that will strengthen the Galleria's future and bring new investment to the community.

An opening date for the Mt. Lebanon Wegmans has not yet been announced.



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Good in the LEBOhood

By Tressa Glover, creator and host of the "Yinz Are Good" podcast

Here we are, Lebo, in the thick of the holiday season. This is the time of year when our schedules fill up, our wallets thin out and we find ourselves dusting off our baking sheets (OK, maybe that's just me).

But this period is also known as the giving season, and that's the moniker I've been thinking about in recent weeks. There are different ways that "giving" shows up in our lives. This naturally includes bestowing wrapped parcels or homemade treats upon our loved ones. And "giving" also includes financial donations to organizations and nonprofits. But it also includes giving our time, showing compassion or sharing a skill.

These are the sorts of gifts that cost us no money at all and whose effects will likely last far longer than any tangible offering we may provide. When I think about my favorite holiday memories, none of them are of a physical gift I received. They're about the people. Conversations. Laughter. Love. Oh … well, there is the food (but I trust you get my point). So it is in this spirit that I came up with a little "It's Giving" list of gifts for the season, which I share with you here:

- Go for a walk with someone you know could use the companionship
- Offer to step in for a few hours to give a caretaker some time off
- Check up on someone who's going through a rough time
- Call or text someone to let them know you're grateful for them
- Send someone a list of all the reasons they're awesome
- Volunteer at a local organization whose work you admire

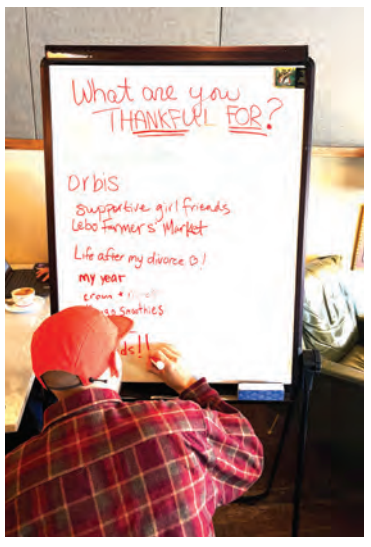
Please email me if you have a similar list or have ideas to add to this one! Along these lines of gratitude and compassion, I have more of your notes from our Gratitude Board and Kindness Crates to share. Our Gratitude Board is a whiteboard upon which I write a question and welcome passersby to write their responses.

On a recent Saturday, I grabbed the board and headed to Orbis Caffe, one of my favorite spots in Lebo (thank you to Sonja, Grant and the whole fabulous team there!). The question I scrawled on the board was, "What are you thankful for?"

Here are the responses I received from folks:

- Being healthy
- Supportive girlfriends
- Good conversation
- Life after my divorce!
- My year
- Crown & Raine
- Mango smoothies
- Music
- My kids!
- The experience of joy and grief at the same time
- Orbis
- My dog
- Friends who have become family
- My mom





Visitors add their message of thanks to the Gratitude Board at Orbis Caffe, sharing what they are grateful for this holiday season.

And I must add that almost every written response sparked a conversation between the writer and me.

For example, I met two sisters and their dog Carmen. The sisters told me I should feature the Trade Institute of Pittsburgh on the podcast because of the incredible ways it helps people.

I also had a lovely conversation with a rehabilitation physician from Allegheny Health Network.

I met a young mom who was there with her partner and her adorable baby. She told me about Storkbites, a support group for new mothers, and offered to put me in touch with someone from the group on the podcast.

It never fails. When people can talk about others who are doing good things, they always do.

And then, just across the street and down the block a bit from Orbis, I gathered notes from our Kindness Crates, hosted by Lebo Subs and Rollier's. The prompt at our crates is: "Please share with us who or what you're grateful for today, an act of kindness that someone did for you, or a moment that brought you hope." Here are some responses:



A Kindness Crate at Lebo Subs encourages community members to give what they can and take what they need, spreading generosity and goodwill throughout Mt. Lebanon.

- I am grateful for my best friend, Hannah. She makes me super happy and always brightens my day every morning.
- I am grateful for my wonderful daughter who is a blessing to me and brings me happiness every day.
- I am grateful for my nice co-workers.
- My husband really surprised me by assembling the electric floor scrubber & tackling the kitchen & hall floors! Really touched - so sweet.
- My friend Jane played with me today.
- I am grateful to have seen my dearest friend Charlie, who clowns around for kids in Mt. Lebanon.
- I helped my friend Dee when she was upset.
- I am grateful that my mom took me to my favorite place to eat: Lebo Subs.
- My teachers are always doing kind things to help me at school.
- Me and my mom got DNA kits on Ancestry.com and I am hopeful that I can find family members or learn about my family history.
- We are grateful for our kids, Ivy and Silas, who are great!

In addition to our Kindness Crates and Gratitude Board, you can relay your good news to me directly at yinzaregood@gmail.com. To listen to "Yinz Are Good," visit www.yinzaregood.com. ♥





What a Therapy Dog Can Teach Us About Grief

Drawing on lessons from her therapy dog, Nike, Mt. Lebanon grief specialist Kristin Darcy shares how compassion, connection and simply being present can help us navigate loss *By Kristin Darcy, MSW*

Our community is hurting. In the days since the loss of innocent lives earlier this month, many of us have found ourselves searching for something to say, something to do or some way to make sense of a loss that doesn't make sense.

If you're feeling lost, numb, angry, exhausted or all of these at once, you are not alone. And if you're wondering how to support a neighbor, a friend or your own child who is hurting, you're already doing something important simply by caring enough to ask.

I've spent more than a decade walking alongside individuals and families through grief and trauma. But some of the most important lessons I've learned about comfort didn't come from a textbook. They came from my therapy dog, Nike.

What Nike knows about comfort

When someone is hurting, Nike doesn't search for the right words. He doesn't try to fix anything, explain anything or hurry anyone toward feeling better. He simply comes close, settles in and stays.

I've watched people who couldn't speak about their pain rest a hand on his back and finally breathe. Nike doesn't flinch at tears, anger or silence. He doesn't judge how someone is grieving. He just offers his presence, steady and warm, for as long as it's needed.

That is the gift. Not the perfect sentence. Not the solution. Just someone willing to sit with us in a difficult moment.

How to support someone who is grieving

Show up, even if you don't know what to say. "I don't have the words, but I'm here" is enough. Your presence speaks louder than any perfect phrase.

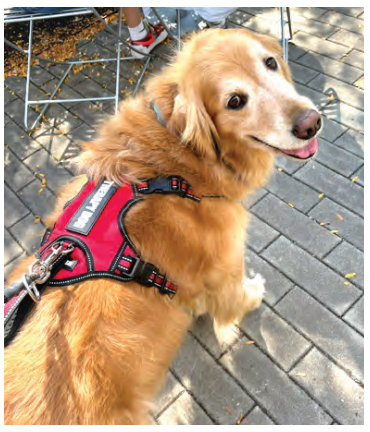
Listen more than you talk. Let people share their stories as many times as they need to. Resist the urge to fill the silence or steer the conversation somewhere easier.

Skip the silver linings. Phrases such as "Everything happens for a reason" or "At least ..." can leave a grieving person feeling unseen. Try instead: "This is so hard" or "I'm so sorry you're carrying this."

Offer specific help. Instead of "Let me know if you need anything," try "I'm dropping off dinner Tuesday" or "I'm going to the grocery store Thursday. Text me your list."

Stay for the long haul. Support often fades after the first few weeks, just when the reality sets in. A text a month from now saying, "I'm still thinking of you," can mean more than you'll ever know.

Remember the kids and teens. Young people often grieve in waves and may seem fine one moment and overwhelmed the next. Let them know it's OK to talk or stay quiet and that you'll be there either way.



Therapy dog Nike has offered comfort to those experiencing grief while teaching valuable lessons about compassion, connection and the power of simply being present. (Photo provided)

Caring for yourself when you're grieving

There is no right or wrong way to feel. Grief can look like tears, anger, guilt, numbness, exhaustion or even moments of laughter. All of it is part of being human. Some days will feel heavier than others, and healing rarely moves in a straight line.

Be gentle with your body. Grief lives in the body, too. Try to eat something nourishing, drink water, get outside for a few minutes and rest when you can, even if sleep doesn't come easily.

Lower the bar. You don't have to be productive or "strong" right now. It's OK to say no, cancel plans and do only what's needed today.

Limit what you take in. It's natural to want information, but constant news and social media can keep your nervous system on high alert. Give yourself permission to step away.

Notice when you need more support. If the weight feels unbearable, you can't function day to day or you have thoughts of harming yourself, please reach out to a counselor, your doctor or a crisis line. Asking for help is an act of courage, not weakness.

Healing happens through connection

When we're hurting, it's tempting to pull away. But grief was never meant to be carried alone. Healing happens through connection, not isolation.

Here are a few ways to connect right now:

- Gather, even simply. Attend a vigil or memorial or invite a neighbor over for coffee. You don't need to talk about the loss to feel less alone.
- Check on the quiet ones. People who seem "fine" may also be struggling. A simple "How are you really doing?" opens the door.
- Lean on community spaces. Faith communities, schools, libraries and local organizations often offer places to gather and grieve together.
- Join a support group. Sitting with others who understand can ease the loneliness in a way nothing else can.
- Do something together. Walk, cook or volunteer together. Shared activities can bring comfort when words fall short.
- Let others help you. Saying yes to a meal or a visit is not a burden. It's a gift to the people who care about you.

We walk through this together

In the weeks and months ahead, we won't always know what to say. That's OK. Like Nike, we can simply come close, stay steady and remind one another: You are seen, you are supported and you are not alone.

If you or someone you love needs support

- 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: Call or text 988 anytime, day or night.
- Resolve Crisis Services (Allegheny County): Free, 24-hour mental health crisis support for Allegheny County residents. Call 888-796-8226 (888-7-YOU-CAN).

Kristin Darcy, MSW, is a certified trauma-informed grief coach and certified grief recovery specialist who lives in Mt. Lebanon. She supports parents of teens and young adults navigating grief, trauma and crises and provides grief recovery support to adults and teens experiencing loss. Contact her at 410-409-3116, info@chooseconnectionscoaching.com or www.chooseconnectionscoaching.com.

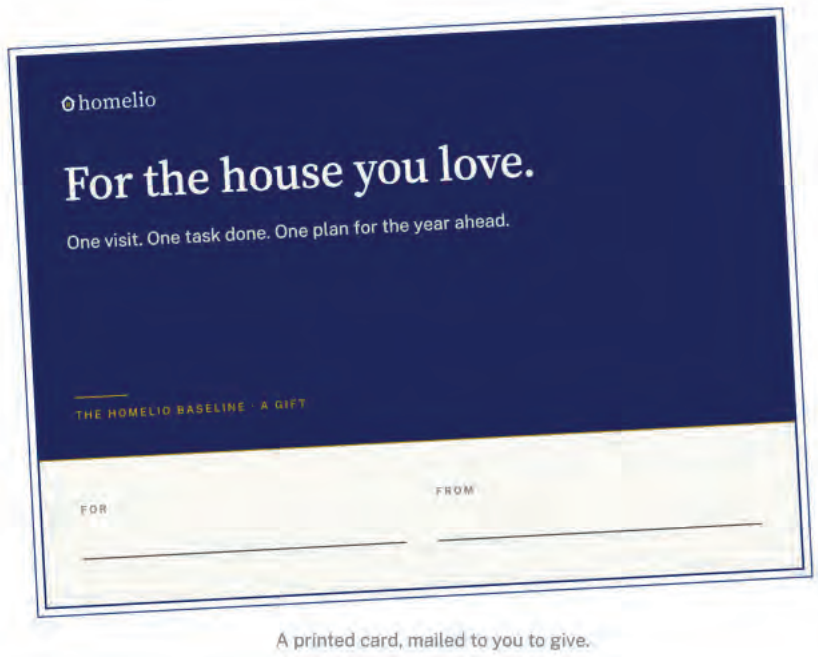
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A Historic Homecoming for Mt. Lebanon's 1932 Fire Truck

After decades away, a 94-year-old fire engine finds a permanent home at the Historical Society of Mt. Lebanon, thanks to a dedicated team of volunteers *By Sarah Core*

The Historical Society of Mt. Lebanon held a "push-in" party for the municipality's antique 1932 Pirsch fire engine on Nov. 12, ceremoniously parking it in its new home at the society's headquarters on Washington Road.

Retired Deputy Fire Chief Kevin Maehling, who helped locate the Pirsch in the 1990s and bring it back to Mt. Lebanon, backed the truck into its newly refinished garage off Lebanon Avenue. State Rep. Jen Mazzocco was on hand to present a special citation.

Today, the Pirsch, as it's called, is featured in parades, holiday events, festivals and the annual antique car show. But nearly 100 years ago, it was the "city service" fire truck called out to almost every fire in Mt. Lebanon.

In April 1931, Mt. Lebanon's commissioners began taking bids on a quadruple fire truck for their 14-year-old fire company, spurred by the demands of the rapidly growing township. They already had one truck, but the advantage of the newer quadruple fire truck was that it had a built-in fire pump, water tank and hoses, plus room for ground ladders.

At that time, "hook and ladder" models were being purchased across the country as fire companies sought to keep up with the latest technology. But they were expensive. The commissioners knew it was a difficult investment in the middle of the Great Depression. The cost of the Peter Pirsch & Sons truck was estimated at $15,000, the Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph reported. Adjusted for inflation, that would be approximately $332,500 today.

The Pirsch was a star as soon as it arrived in Mt. Lebanon, becoming the No. 1 engine. In September 1932, it won an award for being the "best equipped" fire truck among 40 fire companies competing in the Dormont Firemen's Parade.

It remained in regular service at the Mt. Lebanon fire station until May 1951, when the municipality purchased a new truck with a 100-foot, hydraulically operated aerial ladder. The Pirsch was modified into a pumper engine before being retired in 1967 and sold to a Michigan collector.

In the mid-1990s, then-Deputy Fire Chief Ed Meyer and Maehling tracked down the vehicle and repurchased it. They shared ownership of the truck until Meyer's death in 2021.

Alyssa Jones, president of the historical society, said fire department volunteers "stepped up in full force" to make the project happen and give the nearly 100-year-old Pirsch a permanent home.

Fire Chief Kurt Christofel said the effort began in spring 2025, when they started looking for a new home for "Old Engine No. 3."

Maehling, who had been storing the vehicle, expressed that the Pirsch "belongs to the fire department, not me."

But before the keys could be handed over, they needed a suitable garage. In Mt. Lebanon, where many garages were built during the Model T era, finding one large enough was a challenge.

"I was going all over town with a measuring tape trying to figure out where this would fit," Christofel said.



Mt. Lebanon's new first-line fire truck fire truck won a prize in the September 1932 Dormont Parade. (From the Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph)

It seemed meant to be when he discovered that the historical society had an unused garage that was just the right size. But the space needed extensive renovations before the vintage fire engine could move in.

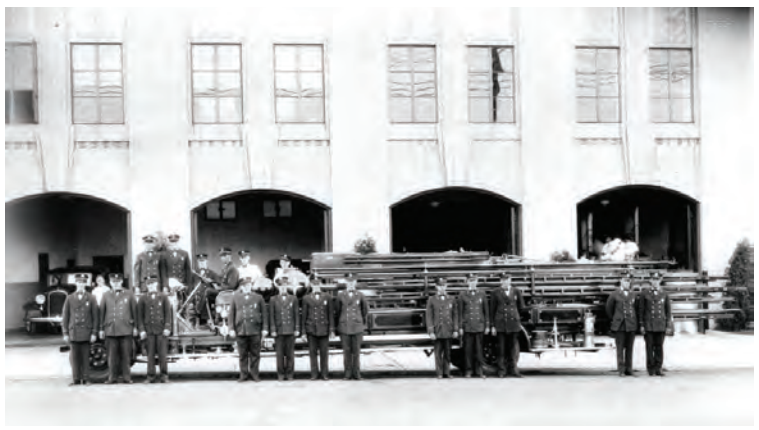
A team of 12 skilled volunteers assisted contractor Rob Schwerdt of Pittsburgh Remodeling Company, who donated his project management services as general contractor. Together, they replaced joists, studs, insulation and drywall.

Architect and volunteer firefighter Chris Brown of DRAW Collective also donated his time, along with that of his colleagues, to the project. A municipal grant funded the replacement of the garage door.

"They've donated hundreds of hours of manual labor," Jones said of the volunteers who helped make the project possible.



The restored Pirsch sits in its garage before moving to its new home at the historical society. (Courtesy Alyssa Jones)



Mt. Lebanon firefighters pose with the Pirsch outside the station in this undated photo. (Courtesy Historical Society)

She added that they have become part of the historical society's family.

"They've gone above and beyond."

In the early days of the automobile, Pittsburgh newspapers were filled with stories of fire trucks colliding with streetcars and taxis or crashing into ditches and utility poles, injuring firefighters and bystanders as they raced to emergencies. Some trucks even caught fire themselves when their rudimentary engines backfired, sending firefighters jumping to safety.

For Mt. Lebanon's 1932 Pirsch to survive into the 21st century is a significant achievement.

"The fire department — both career and volunteer — really stepped up and did an incredible job on their own time getting this thing ready to go," Christofel said. "I'm just super happy that it got a home."

"He has brought this project home," Jones said of Christofel's efforts to rally the fire department around the project. "We are just so lucky to have him."





From Mt. Lebanon to Capitol Hill

Mt. Lebanon graduate Silvana Vujevich lands a congressional internship, gaining firsthand experience in government while representing her Western Pennsylvania roots

By Eleazer Gorenstein

Stepping into the Longworth House Office Building in Washington, D.C., was a dream come true for Silvana Vujevich. But once inside U.S. Rep. Chris Deluzio's office, the Mt. Lebanon native found something familiar: Steelers flags, artwork celebrating Western Pennsylvania and a staff passionate about the region she calls home.

"It's kind of like a home away from home," Vujevich said.

The 19-year-old daughter of Dr. Justin and Lisa Vujevich graduated from Mt. Lebanon High School in 2025 and is now a sophomore at George Washington University. She began her internship Oct. 26 in Deluzio's Washington office, across the street from the U.S. Capitol. Deluzio represents Pennsylvania's 17th Congressional District, which includes Mt. Lebanon and other communities in Allegheny and Beaver counties.

For Vujevich, who is majoring in international business, the position brings together interests she began developing years before moving to the nation's capital.

At Mt. Lebanon High School, she participated in Model United Nations, orchestra and the student union and played varsity field hockey all four years. She credits teacher George Savarese, who taught her international relations and advised her in Model United Nations, with helping nurture her enthusiasm for politics and debate.

"He really pushed me to do my best, and he believed in me," she said.

Savarese encouraged students to approach unfamiliar situations with confidence, she recalled. Her years on the field hockey team also taught her teamwork, leadership and dedication — skills she believes translate to the workplace.

Vujevich originally entered George Washington University as a political science major before switching to international business. Although she changed academic directions, she wanted to maintain a connection to government and public service.

Last year, friends from other states told her about interning for their congressional representatives. Studying in Washington, she realized, gave her access to the offices and opportunities on Capitol Hill. After completing her freshman year, she decided the fall of her sophomore year would be the right time to apply.

She submitted her application in August, interviewed later that month and was selected for Deluzio's office. She plans to continue through the spring semester.

"I was thrilled," she said. "I was super excited because it's really such an honor to represent Western Pennsylvania."

Vujevich works two afternoons a week on Mondays and Wednesdays. Her responsibilities include sorting constituent emails and forwarding them to staff members working on the appropriate issues, from education to homeland security. She also answers phones, responds to correspondence, greets visitors and occasionally delivers items to other congressional offices.

Though she was just beginning the internship when interviewed, Vujevich said she was eager for Congress to return to session,



Silvana Vujevich, daughter of Dr. Justin and Lisa Vujevich and a 2025 Mt. Lebanon High School graduate, is a sophomore at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. She recently began an internship in the Washington office of U.S. Rep. Chris Deluzio, who represents Pennsylvania's 17th Congressional District.
(Photo provided)

when she hoped to attend hearings and gain a closer look at the legislative process.

Her first day remains her favorite moment so far. Simply walking into the congressional office building and meeting colleagues committed to public service made the opportunity feel real.

"It's very nice to work with people that are so passionate and driven like myself," she said.

She had not yet met Deluzio in person when interviewed but looked forward to doing so. She said she admires his commitment to Western Pennsylvania and hopes to learn more about the work of his office.

Being from the district, Vujevich said, gives constituent calls and emails a personal dimension. She knows the communities behind the messages and tries to imagine how she would want a congressional office to respond if she were the person reaching out.

"At the end of the day, it is all about transparency and honesty and hard work," she said.

The internship has also reinforced how important communication is in serving constituents. Beyond answering inquiries, she is beginning to see how information moves through a congressional office and reaches the staff members responsible for particular issues.

As she considers her future, Vujevich sees the internship as an introduction to possibilities in government-related work. She hopes the connections and professional skills she develops will help her pursue another opportunity in Washington in summer 2027.

For current Mt. Lebanon students interested in following a similar path, her advice is to be willing to try something unfamiliar.

"I would say come in with an open mind," she said.

Studying in Washington has confirmed one lesson for her: Opportunities are close at hand, but students have to pursue them.

"The opportunities here are endless," she said.



BUSINESS BEAT

New Faces, New Places, More Reasons to Shop Local

Four new Mt. Lebanon businesses bring fashion, home decor, creative gifts and luxury spa experiences to the community just in time for the holidays

By Sarah Core

Nicki Saini, owner of Koala Boutique, is making a splash in Mt. Lebanon with a bright coat of pink paint on the facade of her upcoming Beverly Road storefront.

Saini said customers have been encouraging her to expand her women's boutique, which has locations in Wexford and Sewickley, into the South Hills.

"I've been looking in Mt. Lebanon for a while," she said. "It has a small-town feel even though you are in a big city."

When Coffee Tree Roasters closed at 299 Beverly Road this summer, Saini jumped at the opportunity.

"I'm very lucky to have gotten that spot," said Saini, who grew up in Bloomfield and remembers walking to a neighborhood bakery for cupcakes after school.

Koala Boutique offers clothing, accessories, handbags and beauty products, emphasizing personalized service and complete outfit styling.

"We want you to have a personalized experience," Saini said. "We're hoping it's like shopping with a girlfriend that you didn't bring with you."

Saini, who previously worked for Lazarus and was also a stylist for Stitch Fix, said her team focuses on fashion-forward styles and a wide range of sizes.

"Everybody's bodies are beautiful," she said.

The Mt. Lebanon location plans a December soft opening. Saini is also making sure her merchandise doesn't duplicate what neighboring businesses offer.

"I firmly believe as business owners, we should support each other," she said.



Nicki Saini poses in her flagship Koala Boutique store in Wexford. In just three years, she's grown her business three-fold, adding stores in Sewickley and now Mt. Lebanon. (Courtesy Koala Boutique)

Haven House Pgh

Lori A. Johnson, owner of Haven House Pgh, shares that appreciation for Mt. Lebanon.

"Mt. Lebanon is an incredibly charming community because you have every type of community in one," she said.

Her new home decor and gift shop at 447 Castle Shannon Blvd., at Anawanda Avenue Avenue, features new and vintage items from local artists, makers and select consignors.

Johnson, an interior decorator who previously owned Everyday Eclectic in Castle Shannon, said opening in Mt. Lebanon feels like coming home.

"It's nice to come back home," she said.

Johnson believes a home should provide comfort and reflect its owner's personality.

"I've evolved into recognizing that my home is my haven. It is my sanctuary," she said. "Furnishing your home should spark that joy inside of you, to create this little sanctuary of your own."

Haven House has hosted limited open houses throughout the fall, with additional opportunities planned in December. Johnson also connects with customers through Facebook Live at facebook.com/HavenHousePgh.



Lori A. Johnson poses with the keys to her new home decor business, Haven House Pgh, nestled in the micro-business district along Castle Shannon Boulevard. (Courtesy Haven House Pgh)

Sticker Station Cutes & Crafts

Local letterpress printer and card designer Lisa Krowinski is expanding her stationery business, Sapling & Sons, with Sticker Station Cutes & Crafts.

The new shop, scheduled for a December soft opening, will be two doors from her original storefront at 696 Washington Road.

Krowinski recognized the opportunity after discovering that stickers and pens were Sapling & Sons' second- and third-best-selling products.

Sticker Station will feature an entire wall of stickers, from scratch-and-sniff varieties to rolls, along with products from local artists and imports from Japan.

Shoppers will also find washi tape, puzzles, art supplies and materials for "junk journaling," a popular craft involving personalized journals decorated with paper, stickers and other materials.

"We want to be promoting the act of being creative," Krowinski said. "I think people are just longing to do things with their hands again."

Stickers also make affordable holiday gifts.

"It's a great little mini gift," she said. "Any kid with a couple of dollars in their pocket can come in and grab something."

Krowinski and her husband, Bill, moved to Mt. Lebanon more than a decade ago. Her letterpress business, Sapling Press, shares space with his graphic design studio, Bootstrap Design Co., above Totopo Cocina and Cantina.

Krowinski appreciates having their businesses within walking distance of one another.

"Mt. Lebanon is just so supportive," she said. "I love small businesses so I hope to see more little storefronts filled in Mt. Lebanon."

Crown & Raine

Luxury head spa and blow-dry bar Crown & Raine celebrated the grand opening of its Mt. Lebanon location Oct. 23.

Located at 603 Washington Road in the former Salon Beleza space, the business offers Japanese-style head spa treatments combining scalp care, hair treatments and facial and neck massages.

The spa is co-owned by Jordan Jankowski, a former professional baseball pitcher and Bridgeville real estate agent, and his wife, Jordan O'Brien-Jankowski.

Mt. Lebanon is Crown & Raine's fourth location in the Pittsburgh area, with franchise opportunities planned for the new year.

The couple discovered the head spa concept during a visit to Chicago two years ago.

Jankowski joked that he "went for the pizza," but the spa experience left a lasting impression.

"When I walked out of that place, it was one of the best experiences I've ever had," he said.

Their concept offers what Jankowski describes as a "premium spa experience," including scalp analysis, massage and a finishing blowout.

"You'll leave feeling relaxed and ready to go about your day or night. It's a great gift to give," he said.

Crown & Raine is open Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Online bookings and gift cards are available at crownandraine.com.

A Lifetime of Making Connections in Mt. Lebanon

From her school days in Sunset Hills to helping others at Providence Point, Joyce Donadee has spent a lifetime bringing people together

By Kate Goettmann

As a seventh grader, Joyce Donadee traded a walk to school in Brookline for one in Mt. Lebanon.

Growing up, she walked about a mile to school and home for lunch each day. After her family moved to Mt. Lebanon, she made a similar trek from Sunset Hills.

The move came after her father became interested in Mt. Lebanon's schools and the opportunities they offered his children.

Donadee remembers sitting in the card section at football games, where students worked together to create messages and cheers.

"It's like yesterday," she said. "After they would tell us the routine, it was, 'OK, ready? One, two, three, up!' and everyone would put it up. Then, 'One, two, three, down!' It was kind of fun."

Outside school, she babysat for local families and worked at a dress shop in the Lebanon Shops, her first job.

After graduating from Mt. Lebanon High School, Donadee attended Kent State University. Her younger brother joined her two years later, and they spent the next two years there together. When she began student teaching, they bought a used Volkswagen Beetle.

"We would fit both of our stuff for the whole year into a little Volkswagen car," she recalled with a laugh.

After graduating, Donadee returned to the Pittsburgh area to teach third grade in the Baldwin-Whitehall School District while pursuing graduate studies at the University of Pittsburgh.

While in graduate school, she volunteered with a drug program in South Oakland, where she met Michael Donadee. They later married.

The couple first settled in Point Breeze before moving to Harrisburg for Michael's work with the governor's administration. They later returned to the Pittsburgh area and settled in Mt. Lebanon.

In a full-circle moment, their son was entering seventh grade, the same grade Donadee had been in when her family first moved there.

Their son and daughter both graduated from Mt. Lebanon High School and were active in the school's band program. Donadee appreciated that they could walk to school, activities and nearby destinations on their own.

Another familiar part of Donadee's life was St. Paul's Episcopal Church.

"I've belonged to St. Paul's Episcopal Church three times," she said.

She first attended as a child, singing in the girls' choir and appearing on television with the group. She returned after college and again while raising her family. Her children participated in church



Joyce and Michael Donadee.
(Photo provided)



Joyce Donadee feeds some friends.
(Photo provided)

youth activities, and her son served as an acolyte.

Donadee also continued a family tradition at Calvary Camp on Lake Erie. She attended as a child, later sent her children and, more recently, her granddaughter attended.

Across three generations, she appreciated the camp's mix of children from different backgrounds.

"The whole idea was acceptance," she said.

As a teacher and counselor, Donadee helped people feel welcome and connected. She started lunch groups for new students to help them get to know classmates and adjust to a new school. Years later, former students told her how much those groups meant to them.

"I love to get people connected," Donadee said. "I've done that my whole life."

That passion continues at Providence Point, where Donadee has helped



Joyce Donadee meets with Providence Point staff about the new English as a second language program.
(Photo provided)

launch an English as a Second Language program for staff members.

Drawing on years of English as a second language volunteer work, she has worked with fellow residents to help employees strengthen their English skills. She said the response from interested residents has been overwhelmingly positive.

Donadee hopes to bring the same principles behind her student lunch groups to Providence Point by helping new residents build connections after they move in.

"If I'm not doing something to help other people, I don't feel like it gives me a lot of satisfaction," she said.





A Legacy of Service, On and Off the Job

The Moeslein family has spent nearly four decades improving homes and giving back to the communities it serves

By Jennifer Amato

Ken Moeslein had an innovative idea nearly 40 years ago. With a background in sales and marketing for home improvement products, he saw the need for a local and personal company that focused on customer service in the Pittsburgh area, according to his son, John.

Ken started Swingline Windows in his grandmother Carmella's basement in 1987. John said the company was the first in the Pittsburgh area to offer a written lifetime policy waiving service charges on windows and doors.

Over the years, John and his brother Jeff helped staff the company's booth at home shows and community days and worked with installation crews during summer breaks. After college, they both worked for their father, and when John moved to California for 14 years, Jeff took over the family business. Their mother, Linda, had also worked as the office manager.

"Being brothers, I think we have a similar outlook on things and a similar work ethic and dedication," John said of the collaboration.

In 2005, Swingline rebranded as Legacy Remodeling, and while the young men focused on carrying on their father's legacy, they also took on additional projects such as shower systems and siding.

"We wanted to make sure everybody was happy with what we do for them," said John, who is now the company's marketing manager.

John said there's a lot of satisfaction when a customer asks to replace one window and is so impressed that they call back to replace more. Often, they ask about replacing the front door and eventually inquire about siding.

"We aim for a full five-star experience," John said. "Your home is your most valuable investment, and we don't take that for granted."

Legacy Remodeling has 13 full-time employees, including the office staff. Jeff and John are the only family members still working at the company, but most employees have been there for years. Sales manager Alan Levine has been with the company for 25 years.

"It really makes it feel like family, even if Jeff and I are the only two brothers," John said.

Because of this sense of connectedness, the Moesleins have long supported community service efforts.

"As a small, family-owned company, we feel like we only exist because of the support of our customers," John said. "And we want to give back to the community because this is where we live and where our children go to school."



Jeff Moeslein delivers food donations during a South Hills Interfaith Movement food drive earlier this year. (Photo provided)



John Moeslein presents a donation check to Veterans Place of Washington Boulevard. (Photo provided)

Most recently, the company held a food drive for Veterans Place of Washington Boulevard through the Better Business Bureau of Western Pennsylvania, where Jeff serves on the board. The company delivered three huge boxes of food at the beginning of November.

The brothers have supported Meals on Wheels in honor of their grandmother, who was in her 80s when she used the senior meal delivery service.

They've held food drives for South Hills Interfaith Movement and donated to its back-to-school drive. Staff also went to the organization's headquarters to fill backpacks for children. They also donated a few hundred sets of headphones for the computers at school.

John said the brothers are animal lovers and have helped Paws Across Pittsburgh Animal Rescue in honor of their office dog, Dexter.

As a Marine Corps veteran, John is always proud to support Veterans Place of Washington Boulevard and the Marine Corps' Toys for Tots program. The company has also contributed to Habitat for Humanity.

"We seek them and they seek us," John said of charitable causes. "We believe in the mission."

They also attend craft shows, community days and car shows in the area, where they enjoy talking to members of the community and running into customers, John said.

"The money from those booth rentals go back into the community, too," he said.

Representatives from Legacy Remodeling will be at the Collier Township Holiday Craft Show on Dec. 12. They'll then start to review their options for 2027.

Legacy Remodeling is at 3090 W. Liberty Ave. The company serves Pittsburgh, Upper St. Clair, Mt. Lebanon, Bethel Park and Peters Township. For more information, visit legacyremodeling.com or call 412-275-4850.

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'Tis the Season for Financial Planning

As the holidays approach, take time to review your 2026 financial goals and prepare for a financially sound 2027

By Kevin Daeschner

As the calendar turns to November and we start to feel that chill in the air, I realize we are entering "the season." Yes, the season everyone starts thinking about at this time of year. But for those of us in the financial world, it is also year-end season.

So, as you review and reflect on 2026, ask yourself: How was your year? Did you achieve your financial goals? And as you reflect on the past year, what are you looking to put on your wish list?

We tend to wait until the new year to get serious about our financial goals and resolutions, but now is an ideal time to reflect on our 2026 goals while there is still time left in the year to consider one or two final items for the holiday list.

It is interesting to think about all the time and effort spent planning for the holiday season, from decorating to gift buying. But how much time have you spent thinking about your financial goals?

Planning and preparing for the holidays is certainly more exciting than thinking about financial goals. But trust me when I say that dedicating time to financial planning can make preparing for the holiday season much easier.

As you head into 2027, it's worth spending time researching and considering a few key financial topics. Start by determining your financial goals and priorities.

For many people, the primary focus is retirement. If that's the case, ask yourself: How much money will I need? How much should I save? How much income will I need in retirement?

These are important questions we should all be asking ourselves.

We tend to rely on "rules of thumb," and when we read general articles written for a broad audience, we often assume the concepts apply directly to our own unique financial situations.

Rather than relying on general guidelines to answer these questions, consider your individual goals and circumstances. Then seek answers that apply specifically to you. Once you begin answering those questions, you can revisit your financial wish list with greater clarity.

Unfortunately, a financial wish list cannot be fulfilled by a mythical figure who lives way up north or by loved ones in the gift-giving spirit. Nor will it magically appear wrapped in a bow in late December.

A realistic financial wish list comes to fruition through a clear understanding of your goals, combined with the planning and execution needed to achieve them.

As you review your 2026 financial goals and determine your priorities for the future, it's also worth considering the following questions:

- How much money am I contributing toward my financial goals?
- What financial vehicles are available to help fund those goals?
- How much am I allowed to contribute to those accounts?
- Am I eligible to take advantage of the additional "catch-up" contributions the IRS allows for taxpayers of certain ages?
- If I'm already taking full advantage of the available options but determine I still need to do more, what are my best alternatives?

The point of this article is not to suggest that you need to become a financial expert. There are many knowledgeable and experienced financial advisers whose expertise can help you achieve your goals.

Rather, the point is simply to encourage you to take some of the time you might otherwise spend preparing for the holidays and apply it toward achieving your short- and long-term financial goals.

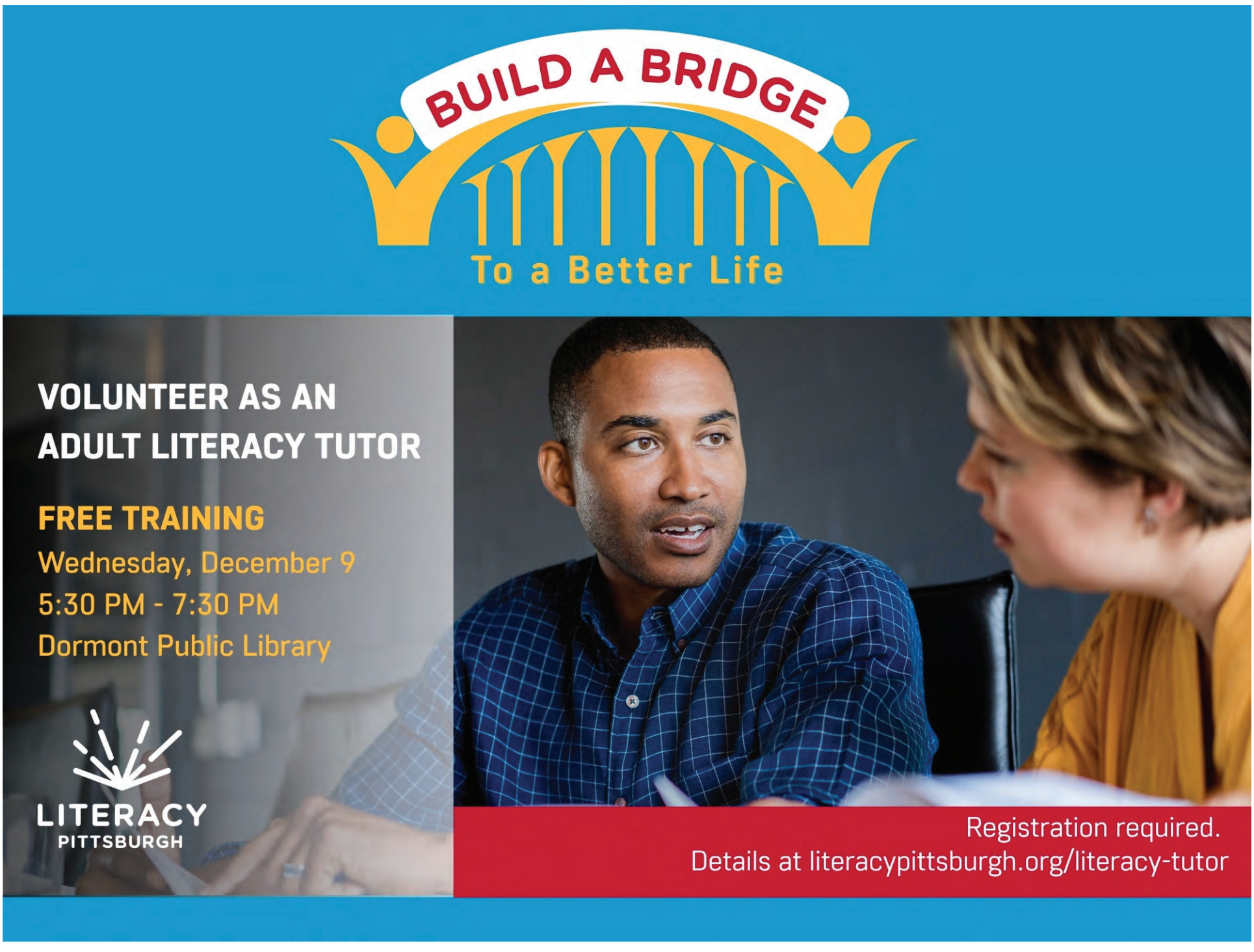


About the author

Kevin Daeschner is a vice president and financial adviser with Brentwood Advisors. He has more than 30 years of experience as a financial adviser and specializes in helping clients achieve their financial goals through comprehensive financial planning.

Daeschner holds a degree in finance from Mercyhurst University, along with securities and life, accident and health insurance licenses.

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HEART BEAT

Stay Healthy, Safe and Active This Winter

From preventing falls to staying connected, simple steps can help older adults maintain their health, independence and well-being throughout the colder months *By Kate Sheets*

As the days get shorter and temperatures begin to drop, preparing for winter involves more than bringing out warmer clothes and turning up the heat. The colder months can present unique challenges for older adults, making it especially important to prioritize physical health, mental well-being and everyday safety. With a few simple adjustments, individuals can maintain healthy routines, stay active and continue enjoying the winter season.

Prioritize preventive health

Winter is also cold and flu season, making preventive health care an important part of staying healthy. Older adults may be more vulnerable to complications from respiratory illnesses, including influenza, COVID-19 and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). Staying up to date on recommended vaccinations, washing hands regularly and avoiding close contact with people who are sick can help reduce the risk of illness.

November is also a good time to schedule routine appointments and speak with a health care provider about any recommended seasonal precautions.

Find ways to stay active

Colder temperatures and icy sidewalks can make it harder to maintain an outdoor exercise routine. However, physical activity remains important throughout the winter months. Regular movement supports heart health, strengthens muscles and bones, improves balance and helps maintain independence as we age.

When weather permits, taking a walk during the warmer parts of the day can be a great way to stay active. On colder or particularly icy days, consider indoor alternatives such as stretching, chair exercises, walking indoors or participating in a fitness class at a local community center.

The goal is to find activities that are enjoyable, safe and easy to incorporate into everyday routines.

Don't overlook nutrition and hydration

Maintaining a balanced diet is important year-round, but winter can be a good opportunity to be more intentional about nutrition. Eating a variety of fruits and vegetables, whole grains and protein-rich foods helps support overall health.

Warm, nourishing meals such as vegetable soups, roasted vegetables and hearty grain dishes can also make it easier to enjoy nutritious foods during colder weather.



Hydration is equally important, even when you may not feel as thirsty. Drinking water regularly throughout the day helps support digestion, circulation and overall bodily functions. Warm beverages, such as herbal tea, can also be a comforting way to increase fluid intake.

Protect your home and prevent falls

Winter weather can create additional safety concerns, particularly when snow and ice make sidewalks, driveways and entryways slippery. Wearing shoes with good traction, using handrails and keeping walkways clear can help reduce the risk of falls. Whenever possible, avoid walking on untreated icy surfaces and ask for assistance with outdoor tasks.

Staying warm indoors is equally important. The National Institute on Aging recommends keeping the home temperature at 68 degrees Fahrenheit or higher during cold weather. Wearing warm layers of clothing, sealing drafts around doors and windows and keeping extra blankets accessible can help create a comfortable indoor environment.

Make mental health a priority

Shorter days and colder weather can affect emotional well-being. Spending more time indoors may lead to feelings of loneliness or isolation, especially for individuals who live alone or have difficulty getting out of the house.

Making an effort to stay socially connected can make a meaningful difference. Scheduling regular phone calls with family and friends, attending community events, participating in hobbies or volunteering are all ways to maintain social connections.

Even small activities, such as reading, working on a puzzle or trying a new recipe, can help create structure and provide something to look forward to each day.

Make winter a season of wellness

Staying healthy during the winter does not require a complete lifestyle change. Small, consistent habits can make a meaningful difference in maintaining health, independence and quality of life.

By prioritizing preventive care, finding ways to stay active, eating well, maintaining a safe home and staying connected with others, older adults can approach the colder months with confidence.

Winter is also an opportunity to slow down, establish healthy routines and make well-being a priority. A little preparation now can go a long way toward enjoying a healthier season ahead.



Healthy Habit of the Month: Get Winter-Ready!

As temperatures begin to drop, November is the perfect time to prepare your home for the colder months ahead. Make it a habit to check smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, replace air filters, seal drafts around windows and doors and keep walkways clear and well lit. A little preparation can help create a safer, warmer and more comfortable home all winter long!

Living Well with Diabetes: St. Clair Medical Group Helps Patients Take Control

By Eleazer Gorenstein

For Talia "Tia" Fragello, PA-C, a diabetes diagnosis should never mean giving up the activities, ambitions or experiences that make life fulfilling. With proper care, education and the right tools, people living with diabetes can lead healthy, active lives.

"There should be no restrictions to the life that you dream of because of diabetes," said Fragello, a Mt. Lebanon resident and physician assistant with St. Clair Medical Group Endocrinology.

As November marks Diabetes Awareness Month, Fragello hopes to raise awareness about a condition that affects millions of Americans while dispelling common misconceptions about living with the disease.

"I think everybody has someone that has been touched by this disease," she said, emphasizing the importance of recognizing symptoms, understanding treatment options and preventing complications.

Fragello, who has worked at St. Clair for nearly a decade after previously treating children with diabetes at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, has witnessed significant advances in diabetes care throughout her career.

Understanding the differences between the two primary types of diabetes is an important starting point. Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune condition in which the body attacks insulin-producing cells in the pancreas, leaving it unable to produce sufficient insulin. Type 2 diabetes involves insulin resistance, meaning the body doesn't respond properly to the insulin it produces.

Common warning signs of elevated blood sugar include excessive thirst, frequent urination, fatigue and unexplained weight loss. While symptoms of type 1 diabetes can develop rapidly, type 2 diabetes often progresses gradually, sometimes without an individual realizing their blood sugar levels are elevated.

One misconception Fragello frequently encounters is that diabetes, particularly type 1, results from eating too much sugar or making poor dietary choices. Another is that people with diabetes cannot enjoy the same opportunities as everyone else.

"The truth is, you can live a perfectly normal, healthy life with diabetes, and it shouldn't stop you from doing anything you want to do," she said.

However, managing diabetes requires consistent attention to factors that affect blood sugar, many of which extend beyond food choices. Stress, illness, physical activity and even emotions can influence glucose levels, sometimes unpredictably. What affects one patient may have an entirely different impact on another.

That variability makes individualized treatment especially important. At St. Clair Medical Group Endocrinology, Fragello and her colleagues work closely with patients to develop treatment plans that accommodate their lifestyles, medical needs and personal goals.

"The most important thing is listening to your patients and trying to find solutions that work best for them," she said.

Rather than discouraging activities that might complicate blood sugar management, Fragello focuses on finding ways for patients to safely continue doing the things they enjoy.

Technology has become an increasingly valuable tool in that effort. Continuous glucose monitors allow patients to track their glucose levels throughout the day, often using smartphones or smartwatches to view readings and trends. Unlike traditional finger-stick tests, which provide a snapshot of blood sugar at a particular moment, these devices help patients anticipate changes before they become problematic.

"You can be very proactive in your treatment of diabetes instead of reactive," Fragello said.

Insulin pumps have also advanced considerably, delivering insulin throughout the day in a way that more closely mimics the body's natural processes. Together, these technologies can improve glucose management, reduce complications and provide patients with greater flexibility.

Lifestyle choices remain equally important. Regular exercise, adequate sleep, balanced nutrition and appropriate portion sizes all contribute to better health, although Fragello emphasizes that patients must learn how different activities affect their individual blood sugar levels.



Talia "Tia" Fragello, PA-C

For Fragello, helping people develop that confidence extends well beyond her work at St. Clair.

For more than 20 years, she has volunteered with Camp Courage, an American Diabetes Association summer camp for children living with type 1 diabetes. She currently serves as the camp's medical director, a role she assumed approximately a decade ago.

The weeklong program brings together roughly 90 to 100 children who participate in traditional camp activities, including zip lining and rock climbing, while learning to manage their diabetes in a supportive environment.

But perhaps the camp's greatest benefit is something less tangible.

"It is a week of normalcy for these children," Fragello said.

At school or during sports, children with diabetes may feel different because they need to monitor their blood sugar, take insulin or temporarily stop an activity. At Camp Courage, those routines are shared experiences.

For parents, the camp also provides a welcome respite from the constant responsibilities and worries associated with caring for a child with diabetes, knowing trained medical professionals are monitoring their children's health.

Fragello has witnessed firsthand how transformative the experience can be. She recalled one young camper who initially disliked camp so much that he wrote home to his parents every day complaining about being there. Yet he returned the following summer and continued attending year after year.

Eventually, he became a counselor in training and then a counselor himself. Now studying nursing, he hopes to someday return as a member of the camp's medical staff.

Stories like his reinforce what Fragello strives to teach patients of all ages: Diabetes requires attention and responsibility, but it does not have to define a person's life.

"It can be on your mind and part of your life, but it does not have to rule it," she said.

For more information about St. Clair Medical Group Endocrinology, located at the Village Square Outpatient Center in Bethel Park, visit stclair.org or call 412-942-7295.



SPONSORED CONTENT

Giving Back, Gr

The Medallion Tea recognizes the dedication of 23 Mt. Lebanon young women preparing t

Four years ago, 23 Mt. Lebanon girls made a commitment to give back to their community through acts of service. Now high school seniors, these young women will join other young women from across the region to be honored for their dedication and generosity at the 63rd annual Medallion Ball on Nov. 27.

The Medallion Ball is sponsored by St. Lucy's Auxiliary to the Blind, a local organization responsible for several events that celebrate these young women and their generosity. The primary fundraising event for St. Lucy's, the Medallion Ball gives back to the organization while showcasing the accomplishments of medallion recipients. The Medallion Picnic, the Medallion Tea and the Medallion Ball all encompass the experience, with each event highlighting the candidates' spirit of service and dedication required to earn the St. Joan of Arc Medallion.

In September, candidates attended the Medallion Tea at the Pittsburgh Field Club, an important part of the festivities leading up to the ball. The tea gave the young women a break from preparations and a chance to celebrate their hard work with their mothers or guardians. Surrounded by beautifully decorated tables, elegant tea settings and lively conversation, this year's candidates, organizers, past medallion recipients and St. Lucy's supporters enjoyed this cherished annual tradition.

Reflecting a longstanding tradition of generosity and service, the Medallion Tea served as an opportunity for several young women to speak about their work toward earning the medallion and what the process meant to them. Candidates also met Bishop Mark Eckman of the Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh, who will present them with their medallions on the night of the ball.

Candidates begin accumulating volunteer hours during the summer after eighth grade and must complete 150 hours of community service before entering their senior year of high school. Many of this year's candidates have gone above and beyond that requirement, dedicating additional time to volunteer work while balancing academics, athletics, leadership roles and family commitments.

Ann Tinnemeyer exceeded the service requirement while balancing two varsity sports and honors and Advanced Placement courses.

"It seemed difficult at first, but when I got started, it became easier, and I truly enjoyed doing it," Tinnemeyer said. "I found it easier to complete most of my hours during the summer. They set a pace of 50 hours per year for three years so that you don't scramble at the last minute to get it all done."

Ivy Campbell also learned the value of time management but found other challenges along the way.

"At first, the most difficult part was setting up opportunities," Campbell said. "Coming out of middle school, some organizations won't allow you to volunteer at that age. Then having enough time to achieve that balance was



Ann Tinnemeyer with her mother and Bishop Mark Eckman.

hard sometimes. Student council, schoolwork, field hockey and lacrosse, and finding time to spend time with family and friends, was all very important to me. I worked hard to find time to do those things, too."

Candidate Tessa Arnold, who was recently crowned homecoming queen at Mt. Lebanon High School, discovered the same challenges as her peers.

"I balanced several in-school activities, including co-president of my senior class, yearbook co-editor-in-chief, participated in Link Crew, and LeboSTARS," Arnold said. "Outside of school, I tutor young children in reading and math. However, the experience helped strengthen my time management and organizational skills while teaching me the importance of managing my responsibilities while giving back to the community."

Since St. Lucy's inception in the 1960s, candidates for the medallion have demonstrated faith and moral character while supporting the organization's mission to encourage lifelong volunteering and assist people who are blind or visually impaired in the Pittsburgh area. For some families, the Medallion Ball is an integral part of family, faith and community.

Many of this year's participants have family members who earned the medallion before them.

Meet Mt. Lebanon's 2026 Medallion Ball Candidates



Stella Adam



Tessa Arnold



Ivy Campbell



Emma Curren



Lucille Kanche



Ava Mylen



Sophia Perricelli



Lia Petrillo



Caroline Rost



Shalin Short

owing Together

to receive the St. Joan of Arc Medallion

By Lindi Pastorius, Photos provided by Ron Richards Photography



Ivy Campbell with her mother and Bishop Mark Eckman.



Tessa Arnold with her mother and Bishop Mark Eckman.

"My mother and my sister are both recipients of the St. Joan of Arc Medallion," Arnold said. "They shared their wonderful experiences with me, which inspired me to want to participate."

The Medallion Tea provided a special opportunity for these young women to celebrate their accomplishments with the mothers or guardians who supported them throughout their volunteer work.

Designed to uphold St. Lucy's tradition of faith, leadership and generosity, the events celebrate the extent of the commitment these young women made.

"When we attended the Medallion Tea, the bishop and several of the other medallion candidates spoke about the process as a way to put one's faith into action for the benefit of others," Tinnemeyer said. "So, for me, the Medallion is a recognition of my efforts to give my time to benefit my community."

The value of community service is perhaps the biggest takeaway for these three Medallion Ball candidates.

"I discovered a lot about myself through the process," Tinnemeyer reflected. "Youth programs like Vacation Bible School or sports clinics cannot happen if people do not volunteer, and they are vital parts of our community. It helped me to realize what needs to happen to make them successful. As a little kid, encouragement from the youth volunteers motivated me and lifted my spirits, which is something I wanted to carry on. Small groups, where I could tell that I was making a meaningful impact, really made me feel good about myself, too."

The three candidates are headed to college in the fall and will take what they learned from volunteering with them.

"Attending the Medallion Ball is a special privilege that celebrates the importance of giving back to the community," Arnold said. "It recognizes the values of community service and encourages a lifelong commitment to helping others."

Together, this year's Mt. Lebanon candidates completed more than 2,000 hours of volunteer service. By volunteering with area churches, nonprofits, community benefit organizations and organizations outside Pittsburgh, these young women have touched the lives of others through their acts of service, leaving behind a legacy of generosity.

"Giving your personal time can really help a community or organization in a valuable way," Campbell noted. "The happiness that other people express when you give your time is better than tangible things like gaining money from a job, or a good grade in school. Connecting throughout the community brings so much joy to everyone involved."

These 23 Mt. Lebanon seniors will be honored at the 63rd annual Medallion Ball on Nov. 27 in recognition of their commitment to community service.



Meredith Lipinski



Julia Lushko



Grace Manning



Arabella McGonigle



Elizabeth McKenna



Ann Tinnemeyer



Lauren Tinnemeyer



Elizabeth Twyman



Viviana Warhola

Candidates not pictured

Cristina Evans

Maria McAuley

Marygrace Romeo

Emerson Smith

A Holiday Dream Comes True for Two Mt. Lebanon Dancers

After years of dreaming about the spotlight, two local students will share the starring role in Ballet Academy of Pittsburgh's production of "The Nutcracker" *By Eleazer Gorenstein*

When Charlotte Young was about 2 years old, she had a particularly specific request for Christmas: a nightgown like the one worn by Marie, the beloved central character in "The Nutcracker."

Years later, the young Mt. Lebanon dancer is preparing to wear a much more elaborate costume as she takes on that very role in Ballet Academy of Pittsburgh's annual production of the holiday classic.

Charlotte, 12, a seventh grader at Jefferson Middle School, will share the role of Marie with fellow Mt. Lebanon dancer Sarah Seydor, 13, an eighth grader at Mellon Middle School. The two will lead a cast of approximately 250 young performers in five shows Dec. 11-13 at Thomas Jefferson High School Theater.

For both dancers, the opportunity represents the realization of a dream that began years ago, when they were among the academy's youngest students, looking up to the older dancers who commanded the stage.

"I've aspired to be Marie for as long as I can remember," Charlotte said. "When I was about 2 years old, I can remember asking my family for just one Christmas gift: a Marie nightgown. Watching the Maries who came before me inspired me to work hard with the hope that I could achieve this role someday, too. I am grateful for all the kind teachers who have helped me accomplish this dream."

Sarah's mother, Shannon Seydor, described her daughter's reaction to learning she had earned the coveted role as a mixture of excitement and overwhelming emotion.

"She's been dancing for a long time," Seydor said. "She's looked up to other girls that have been at the studio and this is kind of like a dream to her."

Sarah echoed her mother's sentiment.

"The role of Marie has been my dream ever since I was a little dancer," Sarah said. "Ballet is my therapy. It fixes all the challenges I face in life. Dancing as Marie, I hope to inspire younger dancers, just like past dancers inspired me. Also, I would like to give a huge thank you to my Ballet Academy of Pittsburgh teachers, and my family and friends. Your faith and support mean the world to me."

A Mt. Lebanon connection

For more than two decades, Ballet Academy of Pittsburgh has been cultivating young dancers in the South Hills, building a particularly strong connection to Mt. Lebanon.

Founded in 2006 by Steven and Lindsay Piper, both former professional dancers with Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, the academy is located along Route 88 in Castle Shannon, just outside Mt. Lebanon.

The school has grown to approximately 350 students, with Mt. Lebanon residents accounting for a substantial portion of its enrollment.

Steven Piper, the academy's director, estimates that between 125 and 150 of the roughly 250 dancers participating in this year's production of "The Nutcracker" are from Mt. Lebanon. Students from all the municipality's elementary schools, both middle schools and the high school will take part.

In addition to Charlotte and Sarah sharing the lead role of Marie, two Mt. Lebanon High School seniors, Cristina Evans and Stella Adam, will perform as the Sugar Plum Fairy.

The academy's production is the largest youth staging of "The Nutcracker" in the greater Pittsburgh area, according to Piper. It features dancers ages 3 to 18, with nearly every role performed by a student rather than a professional.

Preparing for a production of that size is no small undertaking. Piper said planning begins during the summer with costumes, scenery and other preparations. Rehearsals typically start in early October, adding hours of work to students' regular ballet classes. Advanced dancers can spend approximately 20 hours per week at the academy during the busiest part of the season.

For Tracy Riggle Young, Charlotte's mother and a longtime Mt. Lebanon resident, the production has become a defining part of her family's holiday season.

"'The Nutcracker' is almost more exciting than Christmas," Young said. "It defines what the holiday spirit is for our family and it's what my daughter works towards every year."

Years of dedication

Both Charlotte and Sarah began their ballet training at an early age, gradually working their way from small children's roles to the production's starring part.



Charlotte Young, left, and Sarah Seydor portray Marie in productions of "The Nutcracker." (Photo provided)

Charlotte started at the academy when she was approximately 2½ years old. Her mother recalls a child who loved ballet books and videos and regularly transformed the family carpet into an imaginary stage.

Sarah began dancing at about age 3, developing a similar passion for the art form. Her training has included participation in the School of American Ballet's junior intensive program in New York City during each of the past two summers.

Seydor said ballet has become an integral part of her daughter's life, with countless hours devoted to classes and rehearsals.

"It's her second home," Seydor said, adding that Sarah has made some of her closest friendships through the studio.

The demanding schedule also requires careful time management, particularly when balancing schoolwork with rehearsals. But both mothers say the benefits extend far beyond dance technique.

Young credits Charlotte's ballet training with helping her become more disciplined, resilient and organized academically. The studio's atmosphere has been equally important, she said, with high expectations balanced by encouragement and a sense of community.

"It's a fine balance of rigor and high expectations, but also care and support," Young said.

Seydor described similar benefits for Sarah, noting that the years of training have taught her the value of persistence and hard work.

Piper said developing those qualities is central to the academy's mission. Although some graduates have gone on to prestigious collegiate programs and professional ballet companies, the school's primary goal is to foster an appreciation for the arts.

For students hoping to dance professionally, the academy offers intensive training opportunities, including a program that allows participating high school students to attend afternoon ballet classes.

"The Nutcracker" provides another essential learning experience, giving dancers the opportunity to perform before live audiences and grow into increasingly demanding roles.

Piper knows firsthand how influential that experience can be. His own introduction to ballet came through "The Nutcracker" when his siblings participated in a Washington Ballet production. After joining them onstage in a party scene, he began taking ballet classes himself.

Inspiring the next generation

That cycle of inspiration is something Young has witnessed firsthand.

She remembers Charlotte watching an older Mt. Lebanon dancer perform as Marie years ago and imagining herself in the same role.

Now, Charlotte and Sarah are the experienced dancers whom the youngest students look up to, providing a glimpse of what years of commitment might make possible.

"That's the most beautiful part of what the studio does," Young said.

The impact also reaches beyond the studio. Young said many of Charlotte's school friends, some of whom have little familiarity with ballet, are planning to attend the performances. She sees that as an opportunity to introduce more local families to the performing arts.

The academy is extending that outreach through free public appearances, including a Nov. 21 performance with Three Rivers Young Peoples Orchestra at The Block Northway in the North Hills and a Dec. 4 appearance at South Hills Village.

Piper said the events give students valuable experience performing for audiences while generating excitement for the full production.

For Seydor, the annual production of "The Nutcracker" has become something of a community reunion, with familiar Mt. Lebanon faces appearing both onstage and in the audience.

She hopes families who attend will recognize not only the quality of the performance but also the dedication and enthusiasm of the young people behind it.

"I think everyone that would come see the show will definitely see that joy come across the stage," Seydor said.

For Charlotte and Sarah, this year's production marks a particularly special milestone. After years of watching older dancers bring Marie's story to life, it is finally their turn to inspire the children watching from the audience.

Performance information

Ballet Academy of Pittsburgh will present five performances of "The Nutcracker" at Thomas Jefferson High School Theater in Jefferson Hills: Friday, Dec. 11, at 7 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 12, at noon and 4:30 p.m.; and Sunday, Dec. 13, at noon and 4:30 p.m.

Reserved-seat tickets are $20 when purchased by Saturday, Dec. 5. Beginning Sunday, Dec. 6, tickets will cost $25 online and at the door before performances.

Tickets are available at balletacademypgh.ludus.com/200546313.

From a Mt. Lebanon Kitchen Table to Changing Thousands of Lives

Founded by a local resident 50 years ago, Literacy Pittsburgh continues to help adults build skills, pursue opportunities and create better futures through education *By Kevin Brand*

Literacy Pittsburgh's mission is simple but powerful: creating better lives through learning.

Whether helping newcomers to the United States improve their English or longtime Pittsburgh residents develop job skills, the organization has spent five decades opening doors to education and opportunity.

Its story began in 1976 at the Mt. Lebanon kitchen table of resident Mary Yardumian. What started as a grassroots, volunteer-driven effort became an official nonprofit organization in 1982 and has since grown into Pennsylvania's largest adult literacy program.

Today, Literacy Pittsburgh provides a wide range of free educational opportunities, primarily for adults. Programs include GED preparation, English instruction, U.S. citizenship test preparation, computer skills, math, and college and career readiness. The organization also offers early childhood tutoring in cooperation with local schools.

Classes are offered at the organization's downtown Pittsburgh facility and teaching sites across six southwestern Pennsylvania counties. Volunteer tutors also work with students individually or in small groups at community locations, including Mt. Lebanon Public Library, and online.

Last year, 589 volunteer tutors contributed 25,500 hours helping students strengthen their reading, writing, math and English language skills.

During the last fiscal year, professional teachers and volunteer tutors served approximately 3,100 students from more than 100 countries. More than 1,000 students achieved employment goals, 47 earned GED credentials, 258 continued to post-secondary education and 25 became U.S. citizens.

All services were provided at no cost to students.

The impact extends beyond individual accomplishments, helping address workforce needs throughout the Pittsburgh region.

"This time in history is especially important for adult education in the Pittsburgh region," said Carey Harris, Literacy Pittsburgh's CEO. "Employers are searching for skilled workers while demanding increasingly specialized skills compared with just a decade ago. Employers need people, and people need skills, and we sit in the sweet spot between the two. It's an important time for us to rise to the occasion."

Strong ties to Mt. Lebanon

Although headquartered downtown, Literacy Pittsburgh maintains a significant presence in Mt. Lebanon and the South Hills.

Mt. Lebanon Christian Church houses the organization's South Hills office, where a program coordinator works with students and tutors throughout the southern suburbs and Washington County.

A longstanding weekly conversation group meets at Mt. Lebanon Public Library, giving English learners an opportunity to practice speaking in an informal setting. Additional tutoring takes place at the library and the Galleria, while a family literacy program meets at Mt. Lebanon United Lutheran Church.

Local residents also play important roles in the organization's success.

Mt. Lebanon resident Kevin Brand became involved four years ago after retiring and searching for meaningful volunteer opportunities.

"My personal journey with Literacy Pittsburgh began shortly after I moved to Mt. Lebanon," Brand said. "I had recently retired, so I was looking for volunteer opportunities to stay engaged."

An online search led him to the GED tutoring program, where he began helping students with math.

"To date, seven of my students have gone on to pass their GED exams," he said.

Attending a GED graduation ceremony reinforced his appreciation for the organization's impact.

"I was overwhelmed by how hard all the grads worked, the tremendous support they received from their families, and how life-changing this was for many of the students," Brand said.

Inspired by the experience, he connected with Harris and joined Literacy Pittsburgh's board of directors.

Another Mt. Lebanon resident, Lori Como, has spent nearly three decades helping advance the organization's mission as its chief program officer.

"Over the past 27 years, I have watched Literacy Pittsburgh grow tremendously while remaining true to what has always been at the heart of our mission: helping our neighbors build better lives for themselves and their families through education," Como said.

"Our volunteers' extraordinary commitment and our donors' generosity make that work possible. I am proud of the countless ways our adult learners and tutors have strengthened and enriched our community."

Opportunities to make a difference

Literacy Pittsburgh encourages Mt. Lebanon residents to become involved by volunteering, donating or helping spread awareness of its programs.

No previous tutoring experience is required. The organization provides training materials and ongoing support to help volunteers succeed.

A free tutor training session is scheduled for Wednesday, Dec. 9, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Dormont Public Library.

Residents interested in volunteering can visit literacypittsburgh.org/literacy-tutor.

Donations supporting the organization's educational programs can be made at literacypittsburgh.org/charitable-donations.

Individuals interested in GED preparation, English instruction, citizenship classes or other educational opportunities can explore available programs at literacypittsburgh.org/programs.

Fifty years after its beginnings in a Mt. Lebanon home, Literacy Pittsburgh continues building on Mary Yardumian's original vision, helping neighbors gain the knowledge, confidence and skills to create better futures for themselves and their families.

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SPORTS

WPIAL Champions: Mt. Lebanon Girls Soccer Celebrates a Season to Remember

The Blue Devils captured their 10th district championship and advanced to the PIAA quarterfinals before falling to Downingtown West, ending a remarkable season defined by teamwork, determination and friendship *By Makenna Anthos*

The Mt. Lebanon High School girls soccer team's remarkable postseason run came to an end Saturday, Nov. 14, with a 3-0 loss to Downingtown West in the PIAA Class 4A quarterfinals.

But the defeat could not overshadow a season that saw the Blue Devils capture their first WPIAL championship since 2008, claim their 10th district title in program history and advance among the final eight teams in Pennsylvania's largest classification.

For a team built on friendship, determination and an unwavering belief in one another, the season delivered memories that will last far beyond the final whistle.

The defining moment came in the WPIAL Class 4A championship against North Allegheny.

After 110 minutes of scoreless soccer through regulation and overtime, the championship came down to penalty kicks.

Junior captain Ava Silva helped set the tone with a confident opening attempt.

"As I approached the spot, I had full confidence I was going to score. You have to believe in yourself before anyone else, and so I did," Silva said.

Sophomore Scarlett Pryor, freshman Savannah Peer and senior captain Rebecca Braunsdorf also converted their attempts, while junior goalkeeper and captain Makenna Tappe made a critical diving save against North Allegheny's leading scorer.

That set the stage for senior captain Emma Curren.

After Curren's initial attempt was stopped, officials ruled the goalkeeper had left the goal line early, giving her another opportunity.

As she prepared for the retake, Curren heard her teammates shouting a familiar message from midfield.

"The only thing I remember hearing and thinking about between my shots was my teammates at the 50-yard line screaming 'visualize,'" Curren said. "When my turn was up, I was actually calmer than the first shot."

Curren converted, securing a 5-4 shootout victory and sending the Blue Devils into celebration.

"At that moment, I couldn't believe that we were actually WPIAL champions, something that we had all dreamed of being for so long," she said. "My first instinct was to run to my teammates, the people that I couldn't have secured the victory without."

Head coach Seth Young praised the players for their accomplishments and character.

"These are wonderful kids first, and wonderful soccer players second," Young said. "To see their success, what they did, is the greatest feeling. It really is. You can't write this."

A championship season

Mt. Lebanon entered the postseason as the No. 1 seed after losing just once in 16 regular-season games and allowing only 11 goals.

The Blue Devils shared the Section 2-4A title with Peters Township and Canon-McMillan, while Braunsdorf, Silva, Tappe and Pryor earned All-WPIAL Class 4A recognition.

Their championship journey began with a quarterfinal victory over rival Upper St. Clair.

Curren, a veteran defender, scored her first varsity goal in the playoff win, a moment she called one of her most cherished memories.

"That moment, of scoring against our rival at our home field during a playoff game among my friends and family, means so much to me," she said.

Peer and junior captain Vivienne Slack also contributed goals in the victory.

In the semifinals, Mt. Lebanon defeated defending Class 3A champion Fox Chapel 2-1. Peer scored early, and Silva delivered the game-winning header off a corner kick from Pryor.



Members of the Mt. Lebanon High School girls soccer team celebrate their WPIAL Class 4A championship. (Photo provided)

The victory sent the Blue Devils to the WPIAL championship game for the first time in 18 years.

Following their district title, the Blue Devils continued their postseason success with a 1-0 victory over Mechanicsburg in the opening round of the PIAA tournament. Braunsdorf scored the winner off another corner kick from Pryor.

Although Downingtown West ended their state championship hopes in the quarterfinals, the Blue Devils finished with a WPIAL championship and a season of exceptional accomplishments.

More than a team

For the players, their success was rooted in relationships developed long before the championship celebration.

"We have extremely talented players, but so do other teams in our section. What sets us apart is how much we genuinely care for each other," Curren said.

"We always joke about our team having 'the power of friendship,' but unironically, I do truly believe that our friendship carried over to undeniable chemistry on the field."

That connection extends across the program's 38 varsity and junior varsity players.

"The main thing that has contributed to our success is our connection, not only on the pitch, but off the pitch," Silva said. "Our hard work in the offseason helps prepare us for the season, but our mentality, the support and love we have for each other is what carries us through."

The team's traditions helped strengthen those bonds, from weekly dinners and summer workouts to its annual sleepover at Mt. Lebanon Stadium.

Before the WPIAL championship, players gathered at Silva's home to watch the hockey movie "Miracle," drawing inspiration from its message about great moments and great opportunities.

Another memorable experience came when assistant coach Dori Oldaker asked players to draw their "best day ever."

Many drew themselves winning a WPIAL championship.

"Completing that goal was something that was really special to the team," Silva said. "It was truly the 'best day ever.'"

For Curren, serving as captain meant making sure every player felt included and valued.

"Being elected captain means everything," she said. "I was so grateful that my teammates trusted me enough to lead them."

Silva experienced that supportive culture firsthand when a torn a torn anterior cruciate ligament sidelined her during her freshman season. Young and her teammates kept her involved throughout her recovery.

"This program means everything to me," Silva said. "Our coaches have done a great job at building up the program to be so close."

A legacy that continues

Mt. Lebanon's championship also added another chapter to a tradition dating to 1980, when the Blue Devils won the first WPIAL girls soccer title.

Young, a Mt. Lebanon graduate who won a WPIAL championship as a player in 2006, has coached the girls program since 2019.

He is joined by assistants Sharon Sumansky, Rob Heuler, Oldaker and Melissa Dalbon.

For this year's seniors, the championship represented the culmination of years of friendship, sacrifice and shared dreams.

Curren hopes the team's accomplishment inspires younger girls who watched from the stands, just as she once watched older players and imagined herself in their place.

"I hope that we inspired some little girl in the stands to dream about playing soccer in high school and one day winning the WPIAL championship with her team," she said.

While the Blue Devils' pursuit of a state championship ended Saturday, their WPIAL title, friendships and lasting memories ensure that the 2026 season will hold a special place in Mt. Lebanon girls soccer history.

Nearly 30 Years Later, Mt. Lebanon Field Hockey Is Still Making History

The Blue Devils return to the WPIAL championship game as a program that began with a chance hallway encounter in 1997 continues to build on its legacy *By Makenna Anthos*

The Mt. Lebanon High School varsity field hockey team reached the WPIAL Class 3A championship game this season, marking its second appearance in the final in three seasons, following a trip to the championship game in 2024.

The journey to the title game began with a tense semifinal matchup against North Allegheny. After neither team scored in regulation, junior forward Aubrey Betler delivered a sudden-victory goal in overtime to secure a 1-0 win and send Mt. Lebanon back to the WPIAL championship.

In the championship game at Newman Stadium at North Allegheny High School, the Blue Devils lost a hard-fought battle against a familiar section rival, the Pine-Richland Rams, who captured their eighth consecutive WPIAL Class 3A title.

Although the season ended one win shy of a championship, the appearance marked another milestone for a program that has steadily grown from a small group of players into a multilevel organization.

Seven Blue Devils earned honors from the WPIAL Field Hockey Coaches Association. First-team selections included Aubrey Betler, Hannah Markowitz, Ellie Shaffer and Maggie Vines. Quinn Duffy, Amelia Hanson and Allie Miller received honorable mention.

Among the honorees, Markowitz was named the Class 3A Defensive Player of the Year, recognizing her as the top defender in the WPIAL's largest field hockey classification.

Together, the seven selections recognized players across all three positions, reflecting the contributions and hard work throughout the Mt. Lebanon lineup this season.

A chance encounter starts a tradition

The foundation that carried the Blue Devils back to the WPIAL final began with a chance encounter nearly three decades ago.

In 1997, Shelley Pieklik, then Shelley Walker, had recently transferred to Mt. Lebanon High School from Sewickley Academy.

While trying to find her homeroom, Pieklik got lost in a school hallway and was helped by longtime Spanish teacher Mindy Dorish, then Mindy Abrams.

What started as a simple exchange of directions quickly led to an unexpected connection when Pieklik and Dorish discovered they shared a passion for field hockey.

Pieklik had competed at Sewickley Academy, while Dorish was a standout at The Ellis School in Shadyside before continuing her playing career at Bowdoin College.

Recognizing that the school had no field hockey team, Pieklik saw an opportunity to introduce the sport to more students and approached the athletic director about starting a team.

The athletic director gave her the green light, provided she could meet two requirements: secure a faculty sponsor and find a willing coach.

Pieklik knew exactly where to turn. Dorish stepped up as both faculty sponsor and coach. Together, they launched the Mt. Lebanon High School field hockey program as a no-cut club team that fall.

With few students familiar with the game, parents quickly stepped in to help build the organization from the ground up.

Celia West-Kushner, a co-founder of the high school program and former field hockey co-captain at Miami University, played a pivotal role in establishing the team.

West-Kushner helped guide the original Mt. Lebanon field hockey club beyond its startup phase by mentoring players in stick skills and scheduling games against local schools.

Alongside Michelle Lioon, who handled administrative responsibilities, West-Kushner led the successful push for official school recognition, elevating the program to varsity status and bringing it into the WPIAL in 2001.

Four years later, the Blue Devils captured their first Class 3A title, establishing the program as a legitimate contender.



Members of the Mt. Lebanon High School field hockey team proudly display the WPIAL trophy following the championship game. (Photo provided)

Building the next generation

Today, the Blue Devils are led by varsity head coach Brian Kattan and assistant coaches Lydia Smeltz, a physical therapist at UPMC, and Kayley Chilcoat.

Kattan brings extensive experience to the sideline, having also guided the girls lacrosse team to multiple WPIAL titles.

He focuses on preparing players for the transition to high school competition by maintaining close communication with youth and middle school coaches to ensure consistent instruction in the fundamentals throughout the program.

That emphasis on consistency extends beyond the coaching staff, with the program's founders continuing to shape youth development.

Formed by parent supporters, the Mt. Lebanon Field Hockey Association offers youth programs that help girls in third through sixth grades from Mt. Lebanon and surrounding South Hills communities learn the sport and develop their skills.

Dorish, now in her 32nd year of teaching, returned to coach the fifth- and sixth-grade youth team, while Pieklik serves as president of the association.

From the association, players advance to school-sponsored middle school teams at Jefferson and Mellon before moving on to the high school junior varsity and varsity rosters.



The 2026 Mt. Lebanon field hockey team. (Photo provided)



Shelley Pieklik, left, and Mindy Dorish during the early days of the Mt. Lebanon High School field hockey club. (Photo provided)

This year, that preparation was especially important for a varsity squad made up of five seniors and 16 underclassmen, including Lulu Pieklik, the youngest daughter of the program's co-founder.

Having progressed through the program, the younger players were familiar with the expectations of varsity competition and prepared to perform on the field.

Honoring the program's legacy

Later this month, varsity, junior varsity and middle school families will gather for the end-of-year team banquet to celebrate the season and honor graduating seniors.

The evening will feature the presentation of the Walker West Award, named for Shelley Walker and Celia West. The award recognizes a player who embodies the grit, sportsmanship, selflessness and love of the game that helped establish the program.

More than an individual honor, the award celebrates the team-first spirit displayed throughout the Blue Devils' season, helping carry Mt. Lebanon back to the WPIAL championship game.

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Mt. Lebanon Cross Country Builds on Championship Legacy

The Blue Devils celebrate another successful season while continuing a tradition of excellence that spans nearly nine decades *By Makenna Anthos*

The Mt. Lebanon High School cross country program added another successful season to its nearly 90-year history, highlighted by strong performances at major invitationals, section championships and state competition.

Both teams established themselves early at the Red, White & Blue Classic, competing against 33 Class 3A schools. The boys placed fourth, led by junior Will Zadecky's 16th-place finish among 253 runners.

The girls finished fifth, with sophomore Tamsin Holliday placing eighth among 238 competitors and freshman Abbey Hackworth finishing 19th in her varsity debut.

The momentum continued at the Section 6 Championship, where the boys captured the title by defeating all eight opponents in head-to-head scoring.

Five Blue Devils finished among the top 10 of 140 runners: senior Finn McNamee, fourth; senior Patrick Campbell, sixth; junior Owen Hackworth, seventh; senior Adrian Lupinacci, eighth; and sophomore Jackson Donahue, ninth.

The girls also delivered a strong performance, led by Holliday's second-place finish. Junior Courtney Loughney placed 14th, followed by freshman Shea Brancolini in 16th.

At the Tri-State Track Coaches Association Championships, the boys finished second, placing four runners among the top 15 of 288 competitors. The girls placed all five scoring runners among the top 100 for the fourth time during the season.

Those performances set the stage for the WPIAL Class 3A Championships.

The boys finished third, qualifying for the PIAA championships for the second consecutive year. Four runners placed among the top 35 of 225 competitors.

Holliday led the girls with an eighth-place finish, earning All-WPIAL recognition and an individual state championship berth.

At the PIAA championships, the boys finished 18th among 20 teams. Holliday placed 24th among 233 runners, earning a state medal awarded to the top 25 finishers.



Members of the 2026 Mt. Lebanon High School boys and girls cross country teams. (Photo provided)

A tradition of excellence

The program's championship history dates to 1938, when Don Mollenauer helped establish Mt. Lebanon's boys cross country and track programs.

Known as "Mr. Track and Cross Country," Mollenauer guided the boys to 14 WPIAL championships and 11 PIAA state titles during nearly five decades of coaching.

His longtime assistant, Mike Agostinella, succeeded him in 1986. Known as "Coach A," Agostinella continued the winning tradition, leading the boys to four additional WPIAL championships and another state title.

Current boys coach Drew Haberberger, a high school physics teacher, served as Agostinella's assistant before taking over in 2021. He continues blending traditional coaching fundamentals with modern training techniques.

The girls program emerged in the 1970s as Title IX expanded athletic opportunities for female students.

Longtime art teacher Ron Schreiner became its first head coach, guiding the Blue Devils to eight WPIAL championships during nearly four decades.

Current girls coach Oscar Shutt succeeded Schreiner in 2014 after serving seven years as an assistant under Agostinella.

Another influential figure was Kurt Wentzel, a football and track coach who helped mentor distance runners and emphasized dedication and sportsmanship.

Together, Mt. Lebanon's cross country teams have captured 26 WPIAL championships and 12 PIAA state team titles, the second-most in Western Pennsylvania history.

Honoring the past, building the future

Beyond championship banners, the program maintains strong community connections.

Blue Devil runners are familiar sights throughout Mt. Lebanon, training on neighborhood streets, trails and local parks. Younger athletes can begin developing their skills through cross country programs at Jefferson Middle School and Mellon Middle School.

The high school teams will celebrate their accomplishments at their annual banquet later this month, recognizing varsity letter winners, graduating seniors, captains and most-improved athletes.

Special awards honor the coaches who shaped the program.

The Donley Mollenauer Award recognizes the boys team's top WPIAL finisher. Junior Will Zadecky earned this year's honor after placing 17th.

The Coach Schreiner Award recognizes a a runner on the girls team who demonstrates a positive attitude, hard work and dedication, while the Coach Wentzel Award honors outstanding effort, sportsmanship and commitment to teammates.

The banquet will bring another season to a close while connecting today's runners with the generations who helped build Mt. Lebanon's cross country tradition.

For many Blue Devils, the next challenge begins Nov. 20 with the start of indoor track season.





Mt. Lebanon Dedicates Football Field to Legendary Coach Art Walker

Mt. Lebanon High School officially dedicated its football field in honor of legendary coach and educator Art Walker Sr. on Friday, Oct. 23, recognizing a man whose influence on generations of Blue Devils extended far beyond the football field.

The ceremony took place before Mt. Lebanon's home game against North Allegheny, adding special significance to the occasion. North Allegheny's head coach, Art Walker Jr., is the son of the honoree and once served as his father's ball boy on the Mt. Lebanon sideline.

Walker coached the Blue Devils from 1967 to 1987, compiling 170 victories and leading the program to five WPIAL championships. He later coached at Shady Side Academy, winning another WPIAL title, and was inducted into the WPIAL Hall of Fame in 2010.

His contributions extended into the classroom, where he taught U.S. history for nearly three decades. Former students and players remember his emphasis on discipline, integrity, character and academic achievement.

The dedication followed a grassroots campaign organized by former players and supporters who wanted to ensure Walker's contributions would be recognized for generations to come.

Now bearing his name, Art Walker Field stands as a lasting tribute to a coach, teacher and mentor whose legacy remains an important part of Mt. Lebanon's athletic history. ♥



Legendary Mt. Lebanon football coach Art Walker Sr. and his wife, Beverly, celebrate the dedication of Art Walker Field at Mt. Lebanon High School on Oct. 23. (Photo by Marilee Kline)

Going the Extra Mile — All 50 of Them

Mt. Lebanon graduate Wesley Duncan pushes his physical and mental limits to finish seventh in the CanLake Ultramarathon *By Annabelle Thomas*

On Oct. 10, Wesley Duncan joined an exclusive list of endurance athletes who have completed an ultramarathon. Duncan placed seventh in the 50-mile CanLake Ultramarathon in Canandaigua, New York, on Oct. 10, finishing in 8 hours, 45 minutes

Duncan, a 2025 graduate of Mt. Lebanon High School, is a second-year trumpet performance major at the Eastman School of Music at the University of Rochester.

"For me, running is super therapeutic," Duncan said. "It's meditative. And it's something that is super reliable in my life. School can be really stressful, and music is a very hard business, and that can be such an up-and-down thing from day to day. But running is just another one of those things in my life that I can always depend on."

For his October race, he officially began training in late May. His plan required many consecutive days of runs, strength training for his legs and a constant striving for the endurance that would eventually allow him to cross the finish line in Canandaigua.

"For ultramarathons, it's such a long duration and a very long distance," Duncan said. "It's really about the volume of running that you're doing. For this prep, I did anywhere from 40 to 55 miles a week."

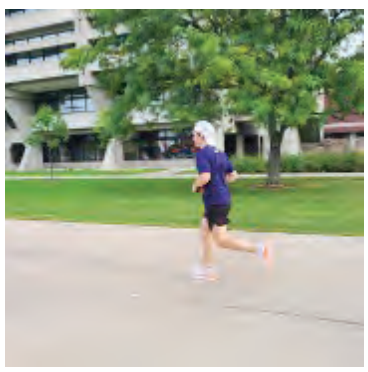
Marathon training typically includes one long run of 13 to 20 miles each week, Duncan said. Ultras, however, require adapting to exhaustion, so plans often include a second long run the next day at about 70% of the previous day's run.

"You're practicing running on really tired legs," Duncan explained.

Despite the immense physical strain that this training entails, Duncan sees running as a source of relief.

"It's not great every day," Duncan said. "But it's something that I enjoy, and I would say that running for me did kind of spawn from darker periods of my life. I used it as an outlet."

Duncan credited popular social media personality and endurance athlete David Goggins as a major source of inspiration. According to UltraRunning Magazine, only about 150,000 North Americans finished an ultramarathon this year, making it an incredibly exclusive accomplishment. With such a small percentage of the population reaching those heights of athleticism, Duncan looked to people like Goggins to push him forward.



Wesley Duncan runs the 50-mile CanLake Ultramarathon in Canandaigua, New York, on Oct. 10. (Photo provided)

"I have to shout him out," Duncan said. "It's a little bit corny, but that's what it was for me. He runs 100, 200-mile races, which I'm aiming for eventually."

Duncan said support from friends and family helped him finish the race. He's grateful for the people who helped him train and race and reminded him why it was worth it.

"It's really important to be clear why you're doing it," Duncan said. "That opens up the mental bandwidth for you to be able to focus on what you're doing."

try to break three hours at the Pittsburgh Marathon. in the spring, as well as the Chicago Marathon next fall. He hopes to do a 100-mile race and an Ironman, which involves a 2.4-mile swim, a 112-mile bike ride and a 26.2-mile run, within the next two years.

"The biggest benefit to running or working out or doing ultramarathons is that you are basically putting yourself in voluntary suffering in order to train yourself for any kind of situation in life where things suck and you have to learn how to get through it," Duncan said.

After months of dedication and training, Duncan crossed the finish line and immediately looked forward to future races. To him, running is a way to live life to the fullest.

"It's a way to test yourself and figure out who you really are," Duncan said. "Push your limits." ♥



In the Face of Unimaginable Tragedy, Mt. Lebanon Shows Its Heart

Continued from page 1

There are moments when words seem inadequate. When we don't know what to say, what to do or how to help. When even the simplest gesture feels insufficient in the face of overwhelming sorrow.

Yet amid the sadness, something else has emerged: a powerful reminder of the compassion, generosity and sense of community that make Mt. Lebanon such a special place.

Neighbors have reached out to neighbors. Churches and faith communities have opened their doors, offering opportunities for reflection, prayer and comfort. Residents have organized tributes, shared messages of support and contributed financially to help a grieving family. Holiday lights have become expressions of remembrance and solidarity.

These gestures cannot erase the pain or change what happened. Nothing can.

But they communicate something incredibly important: You are not alone. We care. We are here for you.

And sometimes knowing that others care can make an immeasurable difference.

The strength of a community

It's easy to celebrate a community when things are going well. We come together for football games, school concerts, holiday parades, neighborhood gatherings and countless other occasions that make living here so rewarding.

Those shared experiences create memories, friendships and connections. They are part of what makes Mt. Lebanon feel like home.

But perhaps the true character of a community becomes most evident when things aren't going well.

When a neighbor is hurting. When a family experiences a loss. When someone faces circumstances they never imagined having to endure.

What has been especially moving is how naturally so many people have responded. Not because anyone asked them to, but because they genuinely care.

Some have offered financial assistance. Others have organized gatherings or created tributes. Many have reached out privately with a kind word, a thoughtful gesture or simply their presence.

There is something reassuring about living in a community where people care enough to show up for one another.

And often it's the smallest gestures that leave the greatest impression.

A phone call from someone you haven't heard from in a while. A meal delivered to a neighbor. A thoughtful message. An offer to help with something that suddenly feels overwhelming.

None of these gestures makes the sadness disappear. But together, they remind us that even during life's most difficult moments, there is comfort in knowing we are surrounded by people who care.

Finding comfort in one another

For many parents, this tragedy has brought an especially difficult challenge: helping their children understand and process something that adults themselves struggle to comprehend.

Children experience grief differently. Some have questions. Others become quiet, anxious or fearful. Some may not fully understand their feelings until days or weeks later.

There are no perfect words for moments like these.

Fortunately, our community includes teachers, school counselors, coaches, faith leaders, neighbors and countless other caring adults who can provide reassurance and support.

Their presence is another reminder that raising children and caring for families often extended beyond the walls of our own homes.

It is also worth remembering that grief doesn't follow a schedule. While the immediate outpouring of support has been remarkable, the emotional impact may continue long after the public attention fades.

For those closest to the tragedy, the weeks and months ahead may be especially difficult. The continued kindness, patience and understanding of friends, neighbors and the broader community can provide an important source of comfort.

There is no single way to grieve, and no timetable for finding a sense of normalcy. Sometimes the most meaningful support comes from simply being present, respecting someone's privacy or letting them know they haven't been forgotten.

These quiet expressions of compassion may never be widely seen or publicly acknowledged. But they matter.

For additional guidance on coping with grief and supporting others during difficult times, see the related article on page 5.

What makes Mt. Lebanon special

Perhaps one of the most meaningful things to emerge from this difficult time is a renewed appreciation for the importance of looking out for one another.

The response has been extraordinary, but in many ways, it reflects something that has always been part of Mt. Lebanon's character.

We see it in volunteers who give their time to community organizations. In residents who support local businesses and charitable causes. In neighbors who help one another during snowstorms, illnesses and unexpected challenges.

We see it in friendships that develop along our streets, through our schools and at community gatherings.

And we see it in countless acts of kindness that happen quietly, without recognition or expectation of anything in return.

There is something reassuring about knowing we live in a place where compassion is more than a sentiment. It is something people demonstrate through their actions.

We often talk about what makes Mt. Lebanon a desirable place to live. Our schools, amenities, neighborhoods and traditions are all reasons people choose to make their homes here.

But what makes people proud to call Mt. Lebanon home goes much deeper.

It's the neighbor who shows up without being asked.

The teacher who takes extra time with a struggling student.

The business owner who quietly supports a family in need.

The friend who listens without judgment.

The stranger who becomes a source of comfort.

It's the collective understanding that we are part of something larger than ourselves.

Nothing can undo what has happened or take away the profound grief being experienced by those closest to this tragedy.

But the compassion demonstrated throughout Mt. Lebanon has offered a measure of comfort amid overwhelming sadness and reminded us of the importance of human connection.

And perhaps that is something worth carrying forward, long after the tributes have ended and everyday routines have resumed.

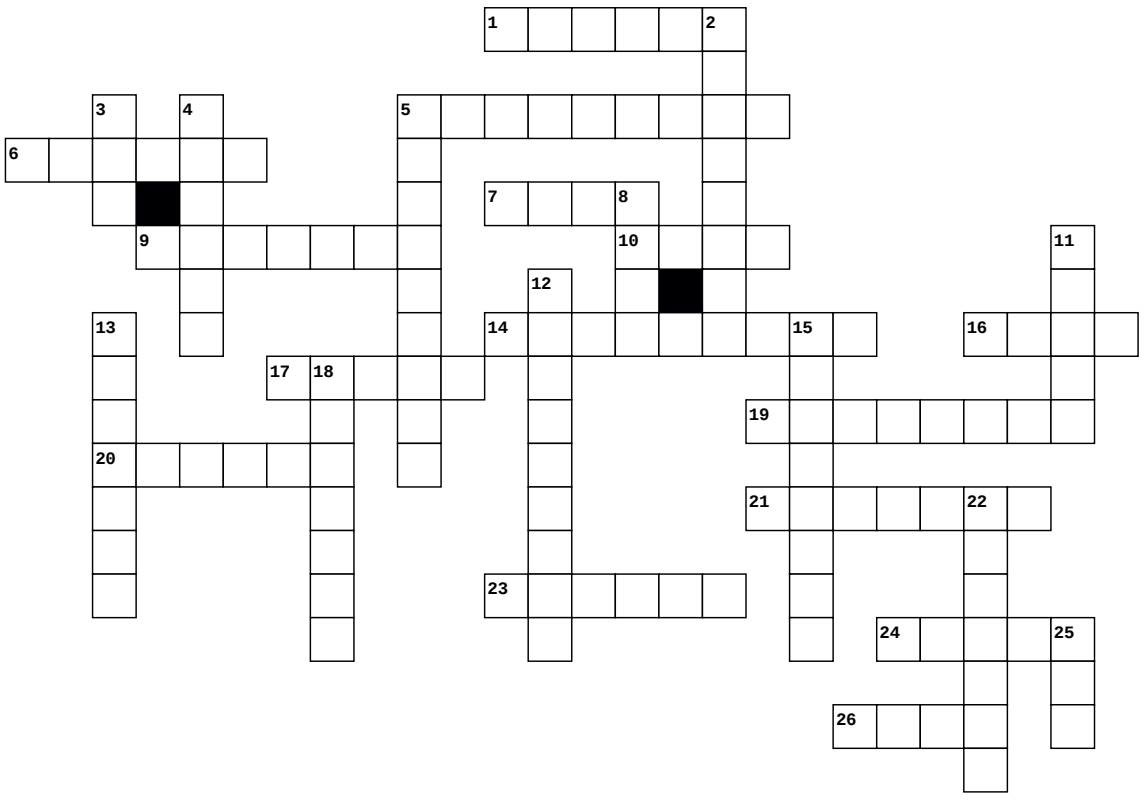
Not because we need to be reminded to care, but because this experience has reminded us how deeply we already do.

Because what makes Mt. Lebanon special has never been just the place.

It's the people. And the way we show up for one another when it matters most.

Crossword Puzzle

Check the answers on page 26



Across

1. Something that's hard to keep
5. Weekend alarm clock
6. Pop artist
7. Sidewalk boundary
9. Our neighbor with good burgers
10. Pgh King of Rock, RIP
14. Snoopy's bff
16. 80s jean wash
17. Agitate
19. Memory expert?
20. Unwanted scenic route
21. Popular Lebo Road
23. Gets lost in couches
24. Front row

Down

2. Just get to it already (two words)
3. Meddle
4. Prairie howler
5. Tomorrow's dinner
8. Park in Lebo
11. Feeling lightheaded
12. Cochran road at rush hour
13. Best place for Pgh cookies
15. Mission, for one
18. Often saved by folding chairs
22. Little ones can be found around town
25. It's better chipped

Lebo Financial Answers *Ask the Advisor*

Reader Question:
I recently retired, and, over my career, I accumulated a significant amount of company stock. Should I sell or hold onto it?

Answer:
Hi Jeff, thank you for the question. To give a formal recommendation, it's helpful to know more about your specific situation, but I can provide you with some strategies on how to handle the shares depending on what type of account they are in.

First, if these shares happen to be in your 401(k), you have a few different options. Since we do not pay capital gains taxes on retirement accounts, you can rebalance the account at any point. Depending on the company or the percentage you own in the account, you could sell a small portion or a large amount. This will depend on the risk you are willing to take and the outlook for the company you received the shares from. The second option is a little more unique and very helpful for long-term planning. This is called Net Realized Appreciation or NUA. With this approach, you can move all of the shares from a retirement account to a brokerage account and only pay taxes on the original purchase price. This will make the most sense for shares that have appreciated significantly. The long-term benefit is that these funds will no longer be forced to be taken out of the accounts when you turn 73 or 75 for required distributions. An analysis should be run to measure the short-term taxes paid this year versus the long-term tax savings to ensure this is the right decision for you.

If the funds are in a taxable account, you will want to be more tactical as you will need to pay capital gains taxes on the increase in the value since purchase. If your goal is to liquidate a portion, you can look to see which purchases have the highest cost basis and sell those shares for a smaller gain or even a loss. Depending on your income each year, you may also be exempt from capital gains taxes. If you file taxes jointly with a spouse and your taxable income is under $98,900, you are not required to pay capital gains taxes. This is after deductions so if you are married filing jointly, your gross income can be $130,000 without paying capital gains taxes and for single filers it can be up to $65,000 (sometimes even higher). You may want to liquidate a large portion of the shares if the stock represents a significant portion of your portfolio, but you will want to be careful depending on the size. If the capital gains are substantial, your income may rise above the Medicare IRMAA premium levels, which can increase your monthly Medicare premiums significantly. These limits are published by the IRS and can easily be found by googling the calendar year and IRMAA table.

If you are looking to reduce your taxes for the current year, you could also donate some of your shares to charity. You can give the shares directly to a charity of your choice, or you could contribute to a donor-advised fund. With the donor-advised fund, you donate shares and then have the ability to direct your donations to several charities over several years, giving you more control of your charitable donations.

Regardless of where the stock is held, you will want to create a long-term strategy that will incorporate not just investments but also taxes, as these two areas work hand in hand with each other. Working with the right team could not only produce significant long-term growth but also significant long-term tax savings for you and your family.

John McGowan, CFA, MBA, of Carson Wealth will answer select reader-submitted questions and offer professional insights on investing, retirement planning, estate planning, taxes and other personal finance topics.

Have a financial question you'd like addressed in a future column? Email your question to Pittsburgh@carsonwealth.com. Selected questions may be featured in an upcoming edition. ♥

Your Taxes Could Change in 2027. Here's Why

Continued from page 1

For Mt. Lebanon, the ruling creates a funding challenge as the municipality continues investing in infrastructure designed to reduce flooding and manage stormwater runoff.

Why the change is being proposed

Mt. Lebanon established its stormwater fee in 2011 to help finance drainage improvements and infrastructure maintenance. Unlike property taxes, the fee was collected from tax-exempt organizations, many of which have large buildings and parking lots that contribute to stormwater runoff.

Following a legal challenge involving West Chester University, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court determined that the stormwater charges at issue constituted a tax rather than a fee. The decision limits the municipality's ability to collect those charges from tax-exempt properties.

That means the cost of maintaining and improving the stormwater system must be supported through other revenue sources.

Municipal officials considered several alternatives, including increasing property taxes, dividing the cost between property and earned income taxes or using reserve funds.

A majority of commissioners favored increasing the earned income tax, which would spread payments across workers' paychecks rather than adding to annual property tax bills.

The recommended 2027 budget includes the income tax increase but proposes no increase in municipal property tax rates.

What it means for residents

Under the proposal, residents would pay an additional $200 annually for every $100,000 in taxable earned income.

The Mt. Lebanon School District's existing 0.5% earned income tax would remain unchanged, bringing the combined municipal and school district rate to 1.5%.

The financial impact would vary by household.

Annual taxable earned income	Additional annual tax	Net change after eliminating $153.72 fee
$50,000	$100	$53.72 less
$75,000	$150	$3.72 less
$100,000	$200	$46.28 more
$150,000	$300	$146.28 more
$200,000	$400	$246.28 more

These examples assume a household currently pays one $153.72 stormwater charge and has no other applicable adjustments.

Residents with lower taxable earned incomes could pay less overall, while those with higher earnings generally would pay more.

Retirees whose income comes primarily from Social Security, pensions or other sources not subject to Pennsylvania's earned income tax could particularly benefit from eliminating the flat stormwater charge.

Why stormwater improvements matter

A powerful storm Sept. 3 demonstrated the challenges of managing heavy rainfall in Mt. Lebanon's hilly terrain.

Rain fell at rates reaching 3 inches per hour, overwhelming storm drains and sending water rushing through neighborhoods. The fire department responded to 52 calls, including a water rescue involving a vehicle on flooded Cedar Boulevard.

Since 2014, Mt. Lebanon has invested more than $14.9 million in stormwater infrastructure, including improvements in Sleepy Hollow, Longuevue/Woodhaven, Elm Spring/Scrubgrass, Vallevista, Bird Park and the municipal golf course.

Despite those investments, additional projects remain necessary.

The proposed 2027 stormwater budget totals approximately $2.3 million, including $1.6 million for capital improvements, $563,370 for operating expenses and $122,050 for debt service.

Projects include storm sewer construction and repairs, street reconstruction and curb improvements that help direct runoff into drainage systems.

Commissioner Andrew Flynn emphasized the importance of addressing infrastructure needs before conditions worsen.

"We can either invest now and stay ahead of it," Flynn said, "or we can let it deteriorate and then really jack up taxes in 10, 20, 30 years."

The commission also considered using approximately $1.2 million in capital reserves but preferred preserving those funds for major future projects, including reconstruction of the south parking garage and recreation center improvements.

How Mt. Lebanon compares

If approved, Mt. Lebanon's combined earned income tax rate of 1.5% would be higher higher than the current rates in Dormont and Upper St. Clair, but lower than those in Bethel Park and Whitehall.

The proposed rate would also remain substantially below Pittsburgh's combined 3% earned income tax.

Final decision expected in December

The proposed tax increase and elimination of the stormwater fee are not yet final.

The Mt. Lebanon Commission is scheduled to consider adopting the 2027 budget Tuesday, Dec. 8, at 8 p.m. in Commission Chambers at the Municipal Building, 710 Washington Road.

Residents may attend the public hearing and offer comments before the commission votes.

Additional information about the proposed budget and stormwater projects is available at mtlebanon.org. ♥

Police Beat

Recent incidents reported by Mt. Lebanon police

The Mt. Lebanon Police Department reported the following incidents from Oct. 12 through Nov. 11. The information is based on police department records. The listing of an incident does not indicate that an arrest was made or that anyone was found guilty of an offense.

Harassment
Nov. 11, 3:29 p.m.
700 block Scott Road
Harassment involving physical contact, striking or kicking.

Fraud
Nov. 11, 8:47 a.m.
0 block Longuevue Drive
Theft by deception involving more than $2,000 but less than $100,000.

Retail theft
Nov. 10, 3:07 p.m.
1600 block McFarland Road
Retail theft of merchandise valued at less than $150, first offense.

DUI
Nov. 8, 4:27 p.m.
1700 block Cochran Road
Driving under the influence.

Fraud
Nov. 7, 12:38 p.m.
1300 block Bower Hill Road
Theft by deception involving more than $2,000 but less than $100,000.

Simple assault
Nov. 6, 5:39 p.m.
100 block Cochran Road
Simple assault.

Harassment
Nov. 5, 1:56 p.m.
100 block Cochran Road
Harassment involving a course of conduct serving no legitimate purpose.

Retail theft
Nov. 4, 11:34 a.m.
600 block Washington Road
Retail theft of merchandise valued at less than $150, first offense.

Simple assault
Nov. 3, 9:27 p.m.
1300 block Washington Road
Simple assault.

Criminal homicide
Nov. 3, 4:16 p.m.
700 block Washington Road
Criminal homicide.

DUI
Nov. 1, 5:07 a.m.
400 block Broadmoor Avenue
Driving under the influence with a blood alcohol concentration of 0.16% or higher.

Harassment
Nov. 1, 4:41 p.m.
100 block Ordale Boulevard
Harassment involving physical contact, striking or kicking.

Disorderly conduct
Oct. 31, 10:24 p.m.
200 block Twin Hills Drive
Disorderly conduct involving hazardous or physically offensive behavior.

Simple assault
Oct. 31, 9:21 p.m.
400 block Sunset Drive
Simple assault involving mutual combatants and bodily injury.

Fraud
Oct. 31, 5:11 p.m.
0 block Rosemont Avenue
Theft by deception involving more than $500,000.

Disorderly conduct
Oct. 31, 12:32 p.m.
1700 block Cochran Road
Disorderly conduct involving hazardous or physically offensive behavior.

Harassment
Oct. 31, 12:01 p.m.
Alfred Street and Washington Road
Harassment involving physical contact, striking or kicking.

Theft
Oct. 30, 9:05 a.m.
1000 block Washington Road
Theft by unlawful taking involving movable property valued at more than $100,000.

Identity theft
Oct. 30, 8:26 a.m.
200 block Inglewood Drive
Identity theft involving less than $2,000.

Mail theft
Oct. 29, 7:55 p.m.
1100 block Bower Hill Road
Theft of mail valued at less than $200, first offense.

Fraud
Oct. 29, 3:57 p.m.
100 block Overlook Drive
Theft by deception involving $200 or more.

Harassment
Oct. 29, 10:31 a.m.
600 block Washington Road
Harassment involving a course of conduct serving no legitimate purpose.

Theft from vehicle
Oct. 28, 4:54 p.m.
100 block North Meadowcroft Avenue
Theft of property valued at less than $50 from a motor vehicle.

Theft from vehicle
Oct. 28, 4:08 p.m.
600 block Ridgefield Avenue
Theft of property valued at less than $50 from a motor vehicle.

Neglect of care-dependent person
Oct. 28, 3:07 p.m.
300 block Old Gilkeson Road
Knowingly or recklessly endangering the welfare of a care-dependent person.

Motor vehicle theft
Oct. 28, 1:04 p.m.
200 block Parker Drive
Theft of a motor vehicle.

Motor vehicle theft
Oct. 28, 9:30 a.m.
900 block North Meadowcroft Avenue
Theft of a motor vehicle.

Motor vehicle theft
Oct. 28, 9:26 a.m.
200 block Newburn Drive
Theft of a motor vehicle.

Theft
Oct. 28, 9:04 a.m.
900 block North Meadowcroft Avenue
Theft of movable property valued at less than $50.

DUI
Oct. 27, 10:46 p.m.
100 block Beverly Road
Driving under the influence.

Access device fraud
Oct. 27, 10:15 a.m.
100 block Crescent Drive
Fraud involving the use of a counterfeit or altered access device.

Theft
Oct. 26, 7:27 p.m.
700 block Washington Road
Theft by unlawful taking involving immovable property valued at $200 or more.

Identity theft
Oct. 26, 3:29 p.m.
700 block Fruithurst Drive
Identity theft involving less than $2,000.

Harassment
Oct. 24, 1:50 p.m.
500 block Washington Road
Harassment involving threatening, lewd or obscene communication.

Access device fraud
Oct. 24, 9:59 a.m.
300 block Castle Shannon Boulevard
Fraud involving the use of a counterfeit or altered access device.

Criminal mischief
Oct. 24, 9:46 a.m.
Cedar Boulevard and Morgan Drive
Damage to real or personal property valued at $500 or less.

Simple assault
Oct. 22, 8:52 p.m.
500 block Oxford Boulevard
Simple assault.

Fraud
Oct. 22, 1:35 p.m.
100 block Abington Drive
Theft by deception involving more than $2,000 but less than $100,000.

Harassment
Oct. 21, 8:01 p.m.
0 block Castle Shannon Boulevard
Harassment involving physical contact, striking or kicking.

Harassment
Oct. 20, 1:37 p.m.
0 block Castle Shannon Boulevard
Harassment involving physical contact, striking or kicking.

Criminal mischief
Oct. 20, 1:24 p.m.
100 block Cochran Road
Property damage involving paint or markers, valued at $500 or less.

Simple assault
Oct. 19, 7:34 p.m.
Castle Shannon Boulevard and Anawanda Avenue
Simple assault.

Terroristic threats
Oct. 17, 5:47 p.m.
1000 block Bower Hill Road
Terroristic threats.

Recklessly endangering another person
Oct. 16, 12:05 p.m.
900 block Lovingston Drive
Recklessly endangering another person.

Theft
Oct. 15, 11:12 a.m.
1700 block Theodan Drive
Theft by unlawful taking involving immovable property valued at more than $2,000.

Simple assault
Oct. 15, 9:42 a.m.
Washington Road and Mt. Lebanon Boulevard
Simple assault involving physical menace of serious injury with a firearm.

Indecent exposure
Oct. 14, 8:02 p.m.
0 block Sunnyhill Drive
Indecent exposure.

Mail theft
Oct. 14, 4:12 p.m.
1100 block Bower Hill Road
Theft of mail valued at less than $200, first offense.

Motor vehicle theft
Oct. 14, 3:05 p.m.
900 block Summer Place
Theft of a motor vehicle.

Criminal mischief
Oct. 14, 12:48 p.m.
200 block Mabrick Avenue
Destruction, damage or vandalism of property valued at $500 or less.

Sexual abuse of children
Oct. 13, 8:16 p.m.
100 block Halsey Court
Possession of child sexual abuse material.

Simple assault
Oct. 12, 11:35 p.m.
100 block Mt. Lebanon Boulevard
Simple assault.

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Lebo Gift Gals

Your guide to gift giving — Grateful Gifts



From left: Jennifer Brandenstein and Karin Smith, owners of Barefoot Stitches & Gifts on Beverly Road. (Photo provided)

We are so grateful for those who extend hospitality to us, whether during the holidays or any other time of year. One way we can show our appreciation is with a thoughtful gift. Arriving with a festive hostess gift can make a host's efforts feel especially worthwhile.

When helping customers find gift ideas in our shop, we often consider the host's tastes and the occasion. Whether it's a Friendsgiving celebration, a trip to your in-laws' home or an out-of-town visit, we're here to help.

Seasonal Hostess Gift Inspiration:

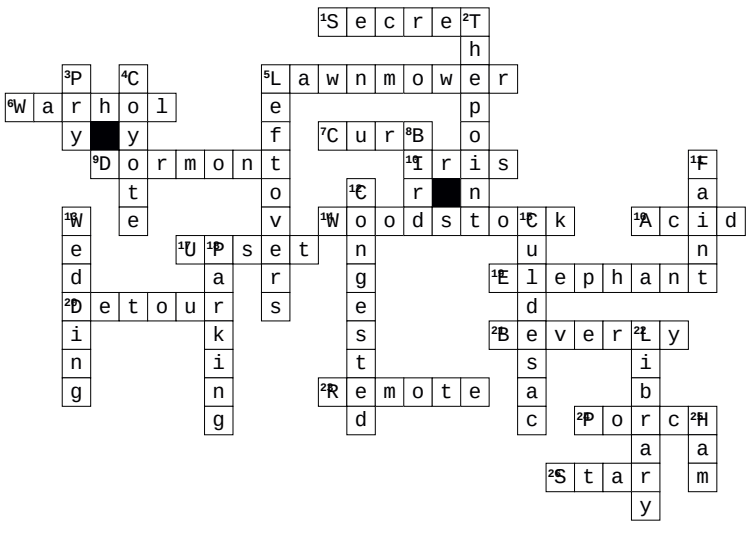
- A luxurious candle
- A rechargeable, cordless lamp
- A small seasonal pillow (usually fine even if it doesn't match the host's decor)
- Clever or cute cocktail napkins with a matching holder
- A gurgle fish pitcher, with or without a flower arrangement
- A Nora Fleming platter with a holiday mini
- A small canister filled with candy
- A Karen Adams desk calendar
- A little luxury the host wouldn't buy for themselves
- A turkey tureen filled with a flower arrangement from Blooming Dahlia
- Tea towels cleverly wrapped around a bottle of olive oil

Whatever you choose, the wrapping and presentation are just as important as the gift itself. A special touch can make even a simple gift feel extraordinary. Let us help make your selection unique, beautifully presented and ready to give.

At Barefoot Stitches & Gifts, we're here to help you make these decisions with a local perspective and a passion for meaningful gifting. We'd love for you to join the conversation. Send your gift-giving questions and suggested topics to info@lebobeat.com.

Crossword Puzzle

Solutions to the crossword puzzle on page 23



The Home Beat

By Jordan Smoke

"The Home Beat" is a monthly column by Jordan Smoke of Homelio. Each month, Smoke will share practical advice to help homeowners better understand the systems that keep their homes safe, efficient, and well maintained.

Why Is Your Home Drier Than the Sahara?

Winter humidity and the window test

Temperatures are dropping, and cold air can't hold as much water vapor as warm air. Suppose it's 30 degrees Fahrenheit outside with 70% relative humidity. Bring that air inside and heat it to 70 degrees, and its relative humidity falls to about 16%. Same air. Same amount of water vapor. Very different reading. For perspective, the Sahara averages about 25% relative humidity.

You know the feeling: chapped lips, an irritated throat, itchy skin, static cling and gaps in your floorboards. Your living room in December can be as dry as a desert at midday.

So, you run a humidifier and add moisture. That helps you, but it can create a different problem for your home.

Warm, moist air doesn't do well with cold surfaces. In July, that surface is your basement wall. In January, it's your window glass. Push your humidity too high, and you're likely to see fog or condensation on the windows on cold mornings. That water runs down onto the sill and can cause rot and mold. You might think it's a window problem, but it could well be a humidifier problem.

There's no single right setting for winter. The colder it gets outside, the colder your glass gets and the less moisture your house can tolerate. Older single-pane windows reach that limit much sooner.

Use your windows as a gauge. Water on the room side means there may be too much humidity. You might not see it if the curtains stay drawn or the blinds stay down, which also makes the glass colder. So take a peek after you wake up, especially on that first morning below 20 degrees.

Dry air is hard on you. Wet windows are hard on the house. Start your humidity setting around 35%, watch the windows and turn the humidifier down when the temperature drops.

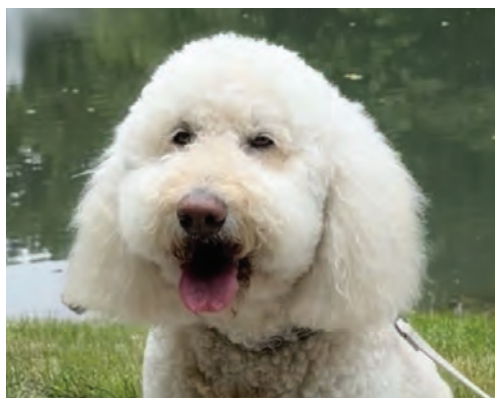
Your house will tell you what it can tolerate. 💛

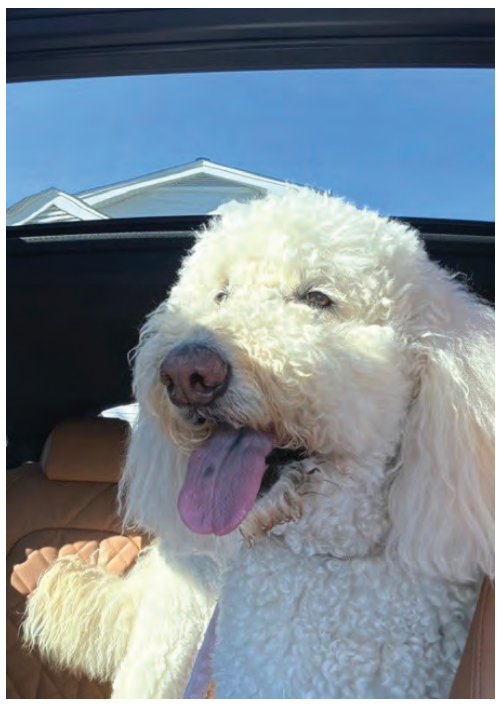
Bark Beat

Celebrating Mt. Lebanon's beloved dogs

Meet Clover

Clover is an 11-year-old goldendoodle.





Clover loves the sunroof open, even when it's freezing. (Photo provided)

Favorite humans?

My favorite humans are my siblings, Michelle and Mark, who were 10 years old when I was born. I loved them through their teenage years and literally look up to them now as young adults.

Favorite treat?

Anything that smells and tastes like chicken or bacon is my favorite treat. Once, I grabbed a whole rotisserie chicken that was cooling on the counter and tried to eat it. Only once, though. Humans learn quickly.

Favorite toy?

I love my iPaw'd. I squeak it to call and send text messages to my humans throughout the day.

Favorite thing to do besides eat and sleep?

I love sitting in the front yard and barking at the neighborhood dogs walking by. If they ignore me, I ignore them when I take a walk by their house.

Why do my humans think I am special?

My family knows very well how smart I am. I love eggs and can hear a hard-boiled egg crack even when I'm sleeping in another room. I know that T-R-E-A-T means I'm getting a bone, and I let my humans know when I want more attention by resting my paw on their arm or leg.

Want your dog to appear in Bark Beat? Submit photos along with the answers to the questions above to info@lebobeat.com.

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