

Have You Heard ...? Christmas Wreaths Readied, Cop Honored, Pumpkins Painted, 4 Million Visits

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Here's the lowdown on what's up around town:

Organizers are readying the Christmas Season wreaths that go on town lampposts from Sedgwick Avenue to Noroton Avenue, in Tilley Pond and the lights in the trees on Tokeneke Road.

"Last week, the wreaths were checked and put into working order by volunteers from the Men's Association of Darien," according to an email from the Darien Chamber of Commerce. "They replaced 389 lightbulbs! During the spruce up though, we have discovered that soon we will have to replace a good number of these wreaths."

Darien taxpayers don't pay for those wreaths — the money is donated to the Chamber of Commerce, which is now asking its members for more.

"We are now fundraising for this year's expenses, plus extra money to cover the cost of new wreaths in the future," according to the chamber's message. "Please consider donating to our fundraising effort. We will be listing our Chamber members that donate on our website. You can use the attached form to donate. [Click here for the form.](#)"

Middlesex Middle School Principal Shelley Somers recently wrote to parents: "Quiz Bowl Fundraiser: The

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Quiz Bowl team is partnering with Chipotle restaurant in Darien to raise money to travel to their competitions. On Saturday, Nov. 17, anyone who comes to the restaurant will have 33 percent of the bill donated directly to the Quiz Bowl team.

Somers also writes: "Our neighbors on Edgerton are complaining that parents are dropping students off on the street. Please remember that all students must be dropped off in front of the school."

The Depot Student Governing Board recently held a Pumpkin Painting event for younger children at The Depot Youth Center. The Depot thanks Manager Roger Fajardo of Stop and Shop supermarket at Goodwives Shopping Center, who generously donated 60 pumpkins to the cause. Lots of fun was had by all, and everyone went home happy accompanied by their pumpkins. — *announcement from The Depot Youth Center*

AAA Northeast recently honored the Darien Police Department with a Gold Award for the department's traffic safety programs. In addition, the Hamden-based auto club recognized Officer T. Court Isaac, a AAA driving improvement instructor, as a AAA Traffic Safety Hero.

Officer Isaac teaches driver improvement classes to senior drivers at the police department. He also is very much engaged with the youth of Darien where he's involved with SADD — Students Against Destructive Decisions — and attempts to educate youth about the dangers of underage drinking and driving.

A department motor officer, Officer Isaac also directs Operation DHS, a program that notifies school officials of moving violations by students traveling to and from school and a "Cops & Kids" middle school adventure program, with a focus on driving and school bus safety.

As part of the STEM Outreach Program, Darien High School students came to the fourth and fifth grade classrooms at Holmes to help the younger students do hands-on experiments with real-world impact. The fifth graders conducted experiments on how to contain oil from oil spills, and the fourth graders created safe wind structures.

It was also a STEM-tastic week at Royle! The Darien High School students recently came to the Royle School to work with the fourth and fifth grade students in their classrooms on STEM projects.

Fourth grade students studied the Processes That Shape The Earth. After a discussion on the benefits and hazards of wind, the students were challenged to design and build a structure that would withstand a windstorm created by the DHS students. This hands on activity demos started the concepts of structural engineering and aerodynamic design.

Fifth grade was equally challenged while Exploring and Understanding Environmental Impact of Oil Spills. Through the simulation of an oil spill, students investigated oil spills and the environmental impact they have on shorelines and creatures. Students took on the task of cleaning up a simulated oil spill to decrease the environmental impact.

Congratulations to Conor and Owen Minson, both of Darien and both attending Greens Farms Academy in Westport won all-league honors at the recent [Fairchester Athletic Association's](#) championship meet.

Each boy won honors in cross-country track at the meet, held Monday, Oct. 29 at Sherwood Island State Park.

(Conor got bragging rights over his brother, beating him by 5.2 seconds.)

Attendees at the Housatonic Museum of Art's fall fundraiser, 'A Night At The Museum: Bringing Art To Life' on Thursday, Oct. 25 enjoyed a fun and casual event filled with food, drinks, an art-inspired scavenger hunt, fortune tellers, a caricaturist, music and more. The event raised over \$25,000 to support museum programming and the collection.

Guests enjoyed gypsy jazz music by *Chat Noir* and sweet treats and craft cocktails throughout the evening, with special cupcakes offered by Baked and Sauced. The event was held in the new Lafayette atrium on the Housatonic Community College campus in Bridgeport.

The [Junior League of Stamford-Norwalk](#), headquartered at 748 Post Road, Darien, is adding to its Read 2

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Succeed childhood literacy program with the launch of a "Little Free Library" at Cove Island Park this fall.

JLSN established the library in collaboration with Girl Scout Troop 50266 and the Ferguson Library.

"Read 2 Succeed focuses on getting more books into the hands of young readers," said Meredith Wahl-Jones, JLSN's community director. "We're so excited that our first Little Free Library will offer another way to increase access to books in our community."

The library will be stocked on an ongoing basis with books for members of the community to take and enjoy. Everyone is also invited to share books for children or adults through the Little Free Library.

Amid the fan-fare of music, balloons, excited staff members, cheering guests and a live broadcast from WEBE 108, Stepping Stones Museum for Children welcomed Charmay Recana, age 5, of Norwalk, as the museum's 4 millionth visitor today.

Charmay accompanied by her grandmother, Nayflor Juodaitis, was awarded the museum's third-ever Lifetime Family Membership to Stepping Stones. Rhonda Kiest, president and chief executive officer of Stepping Stones Museum for Children, presented to complimentary Lifetime Family Membership, a beautiful basket filled with museum swag and gift certificate to the Healthyville Cafe to Charmay and her grandmother.

"It was cold and windy outside and Charmay really wanted to get out and play," said Nayflor Juodaitis, Charmay's grandmother. "Her parents couldn't bring her to Stepping Stones, so I said I would. This is such a shock. We're so excited. We're so happy. Charmay loves coming here, so we'll definitely get a lot of use out of this lifetime membership. With all of this happening today, I'm so glad we came."

The children's museum in Norwalk first opened in 2000. By 2010, it had been visited two million times, and now, eight years later, the total number of visits has doubled.

"Today is an extraordinary day for Stepping Stones," said Rhonda Kiest, President and Chief Executive Officer of Stepping Stones Museum for Children. "We're proud to mark 18-plus years of serving as a necessary and valued community asset and look forward to continuing to support our mission to broaden and enrich children's educational opportunities and enhance their understanding of the world."

The Daniel E. Offutt III Private Foundation Trust has awarded a \$215,000 grant to the Cultural Alliance of Fairfield County. CAFC is one of several nonprofits in the county that will benefit from the foundation's grants.

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Other recipients include the library associations of Wilton, Weston, and Westport; Beechwood Arts, the Regina A. Quick Center for the Arts at Fairfield University, the Silvermine Arts Center and the Westport Historical Society.

Offutt lived in Weston for more than 30 years and passed away in 2016, unmarried with no immediate survivors.

Richard Orenstein, a trustee of the Offutt Foundation, said of Offutt, “Dan would have described himself as a ‘farmer,’ but he was much more than that. Those who knew him would remember him (in no particular order) as a tennis player, traveler, sailor, metal sculptor, wood worker, fixer of anything, collector of everything, lover of projects, stock market investor, and a good friend.”

Orenstein stressed that Offutt wanted his legacy to bring future benefits to those engaged in such endeavors.

The Cultural Alliance of Fairfield County is a nonprofit, membership service organization that supports its members by providing "unified marketing, capacity building, professional development, and advocacy services."

For the public, it publishes [FCBuzzEvents](#), a free comprehensive cultural calendar with the latest information on what’s happening across Fairfield County.

CAFC says it will use the money to continue advocating strongly for artists, cultural institutions and creative businesses in our region. “This incredibly generous donation is truly a game-changer for the programs we offer and the services we provide to our 600-plus members,” noted Cindy Vaccaro, president of the CAFC Board of Directors.