



One SouthCoast

NAVIGATOR

CHARTING SUCCESS FOR SOUTHCOAST BUSINESS

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BUSINESS NEWS FOR AND ABOUT MEMBERS OF THE ONE SOUTHCOAST CHAMBER

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2024

November is Small Business Month

The Chamber believes every month should be Small Business Month! Small businesses are the backbone of our region's economy, with most being home-grown enterprises that employ a significant portion of our residents. These businesses, led by risk-takers, contribute to the vibrancy and success of the South Coast, bringing jobs, innovation, and unique services to the community.

Across our region, Chamber member companies employ approximately 50,000 individuals. These hardworking people provide for their families, pay taxes, and perhaps even dream of one day starting their own businesses. Ask any small business owner, and they will tell you that running a business is never easy, and success is never guaranteed. The pandemic tested these entrepreneurs like never before. While some businesses did not survive, the vast majority adapted, persevered, and continue to serve our community today.

The Chamber is dedicated to supporting these small businesses through a variety of programs and services. Recently, we held a panel discussion on family-owned businesses, and a separate women-owned and women-led companies panel discussion, which sold out quickly. These leaders are inspiring and have much to share about their experi-

ences, challenges, and triumphs.

We could not accomplish our mission without our invaluable partners. The Massachusetts Small Business Development Centers and SCORE are key resources, helping individuals transform great ideas into great businesses by providing expertise, guidance on business planning, and access to capital.

Another essential partner is EforAll, which provides a "boot camp" for entrepreneurs, teaching the language of business, operational skills, and funding strategies. Their pitch contests also offer seed money to help bring ideas to life. Chamber members have long served as mentors in this program, assisting individuals—many from underserved communities—turn their dreams into thriving businesses.

On a federal level, the Small Business Administration (SBA) plays a crucial role as a resource for small business guidance and funding. Through SBA lenders like SEED, we work with banks to ensure businesses can access the capital they need.

Our educational partnerships are also instrumental to our mission. Institutions like Bristol Community College and UMass-Dartmouth support workforce development by educating and training our local workforce,

helping to raise our region's standard of living. Many of their students are the first in their families to attend college, and studies consistently show that education uplifts economies and communities. The Chamber also collaborates with K-12 school districts to support educational excellence from preschool onward.

While Small Business Month may be officially celebrated in November, the One SouthCoast Chamber celebrates small businesses year-round. These businesses are vital to our local economy and deserve ongoing recognition and support. We encourage everyone to shop local, dine local, and think local—not only in November but also all year long. Together, we can ensure that the South Coast remains a vibrant, prosperous community driven by the ingenuity and hard work of our small business owners.

Happy Small Business Month, and remember: supporting local small businesses helps our entire community thrive.

Sincerely,

Mike O'Sullivan
CEO



Business After Hours
Sponsored by FRMCU
Thursday, October 24
4:30 PM - 7:30 PM
Stumpy's Hatchet House

Commonwealth Leaders Series:
Workforce and Housing Luncheon
Tuesday, October 29
11 AM - 1 PM
Century House

Annual Meeting, Brayton & Apex
Awards Breakfast
Thursday, December 12
7:30 AM - 9:30 AM
Whites of Westport

November Business After Hours
Thursday, November 21
5 PM - 7 PM
Narrows Center for the Arts

For additional information and/
or to
register for events please visit:
[www.members.onesouthcoast.com/
events/](http://www.members.onesouthcoast.com/events/)

One SouthCoast Navigator is the official news publication of One SouthCoast Chamber

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Vice President of Finance & Operations, Dorothy Botelho, IOM
Vice President of Corporate Member Engagement & Sponsorships, Kimberly Coroa Moniz
Vice President of Marketing & Events, Katie Greene
Vice President of Public Policy, Ian Trombly
Director of Membership & Retention, Clifford Athouriste
Marketing & Communications Coordinator, Hunter Tackett
Executive Director, Viva Fall River, Patti Rego
Executive Director, Fall River Arts and Culture Coalition (FRACC), Ashley Occhino

2024 OFFICERS & EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Executive Committee:

- Chair: Rose Lopes, Sylvia Group
- Immediate Past Chair: Eileen Migliozi, St. Anne's Credit Union
- Treasurer: Matthew Schondek, Fall River Municipal Credit Union
- Vice Chair-Government Affairs: Paul Chasse, REALTOR® Association of Southeastern Massachusetts
- Vice Chair-Small Business: Curtis Nelson, Nelson Insurance & Financial Services
- Vice Chair-Governance Committee: Doug Glassman, SERVPRO
- Vice Chair-One SouthCoast Chamber Foundation: Carl Sawejko, Sawejko Communications
- Vice Chair-Diversity, Equity & Inclusion: Gail Fortes
- At Large: William Burns, Southcoast Health System
- At Large: Kim Perry, Waring-Sullivan Funeral Home

Members of the Board of Directors:

Terms to Expire in December 2024:

- Nathan Araujo, Advance Career Services
- Kevin Carando, Acushnet Company
- Barbara Casagrande, AHEAD
- Ronald Ellis, Edward Jones
- Rose Lopes, Sylvia Group

- Lynne Mastera, Precix
- Douglas Rodrigues, D. E. Rodrigues & Company, Inc.
- Carl Sawejko, Sawejko Communications
- Matthew Schondek, Fall River Municipal Credit Union
- Bernadette Souza, Youth Opportunités Unlimited
- Michael Tavares, Horacio's, Inc.

Terms to Expire in December 2025:

- Dugan Becker, SouthCoast Wind
- Paul Chasse, REALTOR® Association of Southeastern Massachusetts
- Jenifer Cullen, Vineyard Wind
- Peter Daley, People Incorporated
- Eileen Migliozi, St. Anne's Credit Union
- Dr. Laura Douglas, Bristol Community College
- Monte Ferris, Venus de Milo
- Gail Fortes, YWCA of Southeastern Massachusetts
- Doug Glassman, SERVPRO of Dartmouth/New Bedford & Marion / Middleboro
- Gary P. Howayeck, Law Office of Gary Howayeck, PC
- Anthony Medeiros, Mechanics Cooperative Bank
- Curtis Nelson, Nelson Insurance & Financial Services
- Arti Pacheco, New York Life
- Kim Perry, Waring-Sullivan Funeral Home

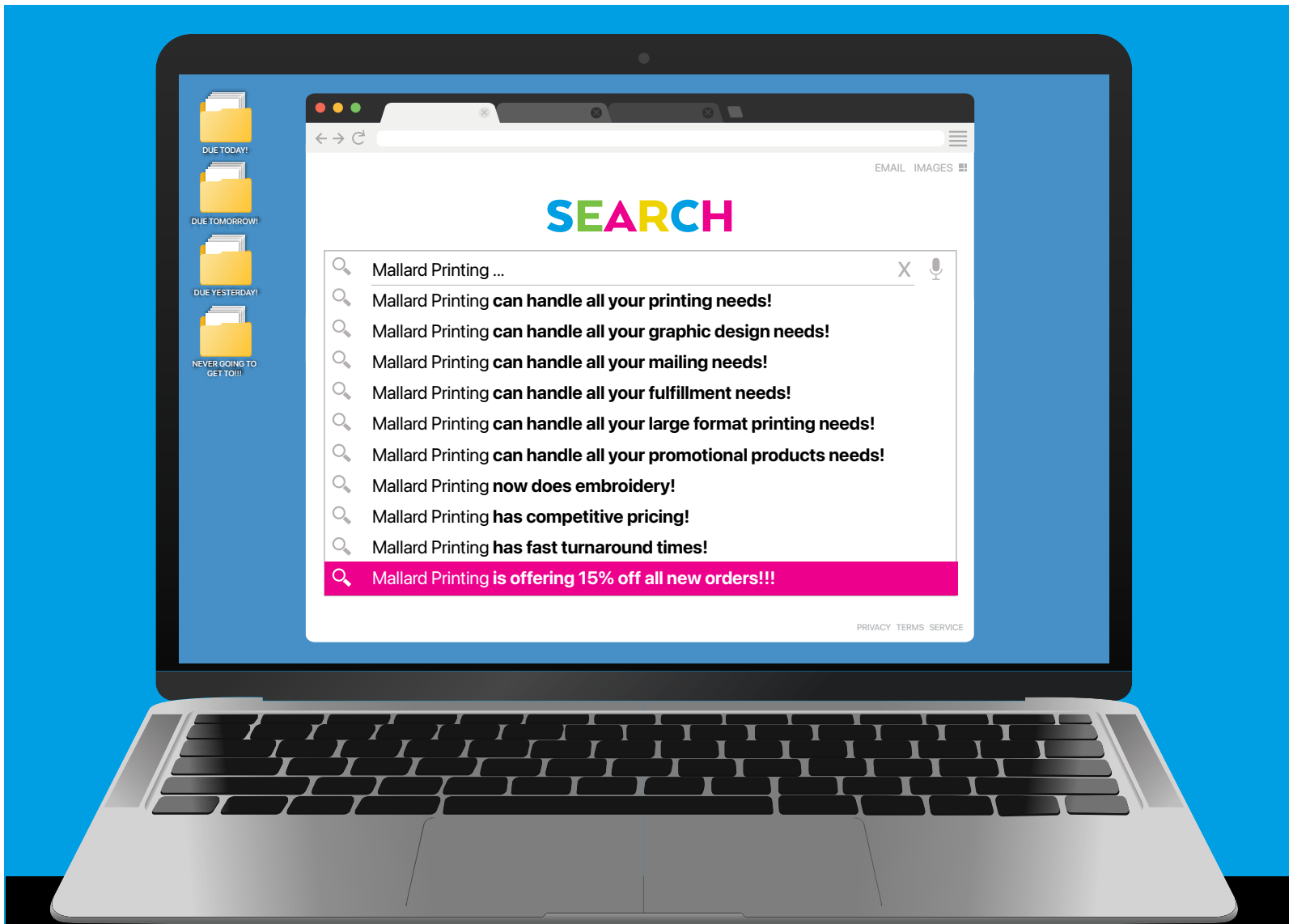
Terms to Expire in December 2026:

- William Burns, Southcoast Health System
- Mike Bushell, St. Anne's Hospital
- Stephen W. Connulty, Paul & Dixon Insurance
- Catherine Dillon, BankFive
- Charlie Fellows, Lafrance Hospitality
- Jeffrey Glassman, Darn It, Inc.
- Jeff Pagliuca, Bristol County Savings Bank
- Marie Pellegrino, BayCoast Bank
- Derek Santos, New Bedford Economic Development Council
- Matt Zenni, Liberty Utilities

The Massachusetts Small Business Center (MSBDC) Network provides one-to-one free comprehensive and confidential services focusing on, business growth and strategies, financing and loan assistance as well as strategic, marketing and operational analysis. In addition, low cost educational training programs are offered across the state targeted to the needs of small business.

Massachusetts Small Business Development Center Network

200 Pocasset Street, Fall River, MA 02721
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www.facebook.com/msbdc



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October/November Policy Pulse

Mark your calendars! Tuesday, November 5th, is a crucial day for all of us in Massachusetts. This election will feature several questions that will significantly impact our lives. Before heading to the polls, I urge everyone to visit the Secretary of State's Website at www.sec.state.ma.us/WhereDoIVoteMA. Here, you can view a sample ballot for your specific address. This year's ballot is packed with important positions and five ballot questions that demand our attention. The Five Ballot Questions include:

Question 1: This law would specify whether or not the State Auditor has the authority to audit the Legislature.

Question 2: This law would eliminate the requirement that a student pass the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests, potentially impacting the quality of our education system and the future of our students.

Question 3: This law would provide Transportation Network Drivers, such as Uber, and Lyft, with the right to form unions.

Question 4: This law would allow persons aged 21 and older to grow, possess, and use certain natural psychedelic substances in certain circumstances. The psychedelic substances allowed would be two substances found in mushrooms (psilocybin and psilocyn) and three substances found in plants (dimethyltryptamine, mescaline, and ibogaine). These substances could be purchased at an approved location for use under the supervision of a licensed facilitator.

Question 5: This proposed law would gradually increase the minimum hourly wage an employer must pay a tipped worker over the course of five years.

While every question on the ballot will impact you in some way, shape, or form, for this edition of the Policy Pulse, I am going to focus on two ballot questions that One South-Coast has taken a strong stance on.

Question 2 asks voters if they want to eliminate passing the MCAS exam as a graduation requirement. Thirty years ago, the state transformed our education system with Education Reform and MCAS, catapulting the Commonwealth from mediocrity to



the number one ranked public school system in the nation. If question 2 passes, that progress will come to an end, and we will return to the days of serious inequity for our students. Since we adopted this standard and implemented it, graduation rates in our state have gone up, dropout rates have gone down, and student achievement has increased for all categories of students. Removing a statewide standard would create serious inequities as every single school district would now set its own graduation standards, returning us to a time when we had lower expectations for certain students because of their zip code, race, economic background, language, or disability. We should also keep in mind that ninety percent of students pass the exam on the first try. Students are given five chances to pass the tenth-grade exam before the end of twelfth grade. For those who cannot, waivers are granted to students who can show, through a portfolio of their work or by having a grade point average equal to a peer cohort who passed the exam, that they have achieved the standards. Less than 1% of students end up being denied a diploma due to this requirement. Our focus should continue to be helping that 1% get over the bar rather than lowering it for everybody. When it comes to business climates and competitiveness, Massachusetts ranks amongst the worst in the country. Our housing is expensive, our roads and bridges are deteriorating, and our winters can be brutal. The number one thing we have going for us is our workforce. Outside business invests in Massachusetts because we have a well-educated and well-trained workforce. If our education attainment levels fall, the Massachusetts economy as a whole will face serious repercussions. Please vote no on Question 2.

The other ballot question that One South-Coast has been working tirelessly on is Question 5. I like to look at this question from a few different angles. First, let's consider the owners, and entrepreneurs. According to

the National Restaurant Association, 80% of restaurants fail within the first five years of opening. The restaurant industry faces some of the lowest profit margins out of any industry. On average, restaurant profit margins typically range between 3% and 5%. Yet, many of our Main Streets and downtowns heavily rely on our bars and restaurants. These businesses and their staff are the heartbeat of our downtowns. While sometimes your favorite watering hole may seem like a cash cow, more often than not, this is not the case.

Next, let's consider the consumers, which we all are! Raising the minimum wage for tipped workers by well over 100% will substantially raise the cost of doing business. With most restaurants operating at a 3%-5% profit margin, they will have to raise prices and reduce staffing. This means our favorite meals might cost more, our favorite servers might be spread thin, wait times could increase and service could decrease. The incentive for a great experience at a restaurant would be taken away from consumers.

Finally, let's consider the servers and bartenders this law will impact. As a former bartender, I relate to this angle the most. In a recent survey, 91% of servers said they prefer the current system with a lower base wage and tips that allow them to earn more than minimum wage. This means that the vast majority of servers and bartenders believe that if their base wages are increased, a customer's incentive to tip them will decrease, resulting in less take-home pay. According to an analysis by Toast, California, one of the few states where this policy has been implemented, consistently has the lowest tip average among all 50 states. In Washington, DC, this policy was implemented late last year. Over 10% of tipped employees have either been laid off or left the industry in the first nine months due to lower take-home pay and closures. Our servers and bartenders are our family members, friends, and neighbors. They have unique hours and flexibility, they take home cash, and their performance directly impacts how much they make. Overwhelmingly, they do not want the current system to change. Please don't make them. Vote No on Question 5.

Ian Trombly
Vice President of Public Policy

Good News!

14 South Street Sold for \$2.25 Million, Marking Another Milestone in New Bedford's Growth



In a notable real estate deal, 14 South Street in New Bedford was sold for \$2.25 million to the owners of a growing pet food processing business. Facilitated by Joe Pinto of Coastal Realty, the sale highlights New Bedford's appeal as a business hub, driven by its expanding opportunities and new commuter rail. Coastal Realty sees this as another step in the city's ongoing growth and success.



Dave Botting, President and CEO of Community Connections, Announces Retirement After 9 Years at the Agency



Dave Botting, President and CEO of Community Connections, announced his retirement after nine years with the agency, including seven as CEO. Under his leadership, the organization grew its mission to provide person-centered services for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Dave's tenure was marked by a deep commitment to inclusion, safety, and integrity, fostering a supportive environment for both staff and clients. As he retires in spring 2025, the Board has begun the search for his successor, ensuring the continuation of the values Dave has instilled in the agency.



Bristol County Savings Bank Named a Top Charitable Contributor in Massachusetts by Boston Business Journal

Bristol County Savings Bank (BCSB) was recognized as one of the Top Charitable Contributors in Massachusetts by the Boston Business Journal for the eighth consecutive year. Ranked #35, the bank, through its charitable foundation, donated over \$1.9 million to Massachusetts nonprofits in 2023 and employees volunteered 6,072 hours. Since its inception in 1996, the foundation has committed more than \$32.5 million to support education, economic development, and housing in the region, demonstrating BCSB's ongoing dedication to strengthening the communities it serves.



Jack Rua Invitational Supports Operations at "Camp Jack" Golf Tournament raises \$70k for The Jack Rua Camp for Children with Diabetes



People Incorporated hosted its annual Jack Rua Invitational on September 17, 2024, at Crestwood Country Club, raising a record \$70,000 for the Jack Rua Camp for Children with Diabetes. The event, featuring 128 golfers, was supported by dozens of sponsors, including Mechanics Cooperative Bank and Rua-Dumont-Audet Insurance Agency. The winning foursome, sponsored by Servpro Team TMC,

finished with a score of 60. Funds raised will directly support Camp Jack, a day camp serving children with Type 1 diabetes.



St. Anne's Credit Union Celebrates Community at 29th Annual Free Summer Concert



St. Anne's Credit Union hosted its 29th Annual Free Summer Concert at Heritage State Park in Fall River, featuring a performance by Rolling Stones tribute band, 19th Nervous Breakdown. The event attracted music lovers from across the SouthCoast, with attendees enjoying live music, food trucks, and complimentary St. Anne's swag. Eileen Migliozi, President and CEO, highlighted the concert's role in strengthening community ties. For future events, including finance seminars and next year's 30th summer concert, visit stannes.com and follow St. Anne's on Facebook.



Bristol County Savings Bank Promotes Silva to AVP/Branch Manager



Bristol County Savings Bank (BCSB) in Taunton, MA has promoted Kai-

tlyn Silva to Assistant Vice President/Branch Manager of its East Freetown office. In this role, she'll manage branch operations, customer relations, and business development. Silva previously worked as an Assistant Branch Manager in East Freetown and a Universal Banker in Dartmouth. She has volunteered with local non-profits and holds degrees from the University of South Florida and Bristol Community College. Silva resides in Dartmouth, MA.



Coastal Business Brokers Honors Adam Bradshaw as "Outstanding Producer" in the 2023 IBBA Awards



Adam Bradshaw of Coastal Business Brokers has received the "Outstanding Producer" award in the 2023 Member Excellence Awards from the International Business Brokers Association (IBBA). The IBBA is the largest professional trade association for business brokers globally. This award recognizes Adam's exceptional performance and dedication to client service. Kevin Nery, President of Coastal Business Brokers, praised Adam's contributions to the company and the industry. The award highlights Adam's expertise and Coastal Business Brokers' commitment to excellence in business brokerage.



Do you have good news? Please email information to: info@onesouthcoast.com

2024 Apex Award Recipients

The **APEX Business of the Year Award** pays tribute to the hard work, sacrifice and dedication local business owners and professionals bestow upon the region. These businesses represent the true vibrancy of our local economy by creating jobs, positively affecting the economic climate, and influencing the region's overall quality of life. The APEX Award designation comes as the result of an application from the companies wishing to be recognized and is a juried process for selection. A business may submit separate applications for more than one category if appropriate.

Swansea Ambulance Corps

Swansea Ambulance Corps was established in 1953 to provide emergency medical services to the Town of Swansea. It initially started with an all volunteer staff responding with a BLS (Basic Life Support) crew to all calls for service. Over the years the Corps has grown, building a new station in 2014, and using a combination of volunteers and paid staff to meet the growing demand of the town and its neighbors in providing ALS (Advanced Life Support). A non-profit since its inception, and receiving no funding from the town, the Corps remains committed to the town's citizens, through monies provided through billing, as well as a yearly drive, which is greatly supported from its generous donors year after year.

Community Connections, Inc.

Community Connections, Inc. provides life-enriching services that promote optimal independence for people with disabilities. Through a person-centered approach, individualized programs are designed to build on the strengths of the whole person, enabling them to live as independently as possible in their community. With eight locations across southeastern Massachusetts, Community Connections offers day habilitation, life skills, employment services, social recreation, community-based day supports, supported living services, and transportation services to over 800 program participants in Fall River, Fairhaven, Wareham, Plymouth, Mashpee, and South Yarmouth.

Neto Insurance Agency

Neto Insurance Agency was founded in 1973 by Manuel Fernando Neto in New Bedford and in 1979 opened a second office in Fall River. Since then, Neto Insurance Agency's mission has been to serve the personal and commercial insurance needs for families and businesses in MA & RI. The second generation (2 of Manuel's 3 children) now lead the company, Rosemary (President) and Stephen (Vice-President). 6 of his 8 grandchildren have worked at the company part-time with hope that some of them will continue as the third generation. Neto Insurance Agency's staff is top-notch and considered a part of their family, understanding that the key to a successful business is believing in the mission and treating our clients with utmost kindness and professionalism. It is also their belief that as a local business, it is their obligation to give back to the communities that support them. Neto Insurance is happy to support many local organizations in the greater NB & FR areas. They are grateful to their staff and clients and with their loyalty, will continue to strive towards the success of their mission and continue to support our communities.

Case High Scholarship Trust

The Case High Scholarship Trust has been awarding scholarships to members of the senior class of Joseph Case High School since 1947. Trustees are members of the community, Friends of the Cardinals, executives, and current and retired professional staff. Many Trustees are Case graduates. For 77 years, the Case High Scholarship Trust has impacted the lives of countless students who have gone on to pursue post-secondary education. This would not have been possible without the very generous support of many individuals, families, businesses, and organizations in the Swansea community. Students apply for a Trustee scholarship with a written application and an in-person interview. Awards are then sent directly to the applicant's college or technical school to reduce tuition costs. The committee looks forward to continuing this tradition for many years to come, thanks to organizations such as One SouthCoast Chamber.

2024 Brayton Award Recipients

The **John S. Brayton Community Service Awards** honors individuals who have made a genuine difference in the region.

Joseph Borges



Joseph C. Borges and his family immigrated to the United States 1967. At 16, Joseph left school to contribute to his family's. He enlisted in the U. S. Army at 18. He served honorably, obtained his GED and became a United States citizen. In 1980 Joseph enrolled at Massasoit Community College, earning an Associate degree. Subsequently, Joseph pursued his Bachelor of Science degree in the Engineering at UMASS in 1986. In 1992, Joseph worked as head of the Tobacco Control Program for the City of FR. He then entered the banking in 2003, becoming a Branch Manager for First Federal Savings Bank. In 2010, Joseph joined BankFive, as V P of Business Development. Joseph has actively engaged in organizations such as the Prince Henry Society of FR, FR Downtown Business Association, FR Historical Society, Southcoast Health Business Committee, Business for Better Parking, FR Chamber of Commerce, American Cancer Society, United Way of Greater NB, and Holy Trinity School Finance Committee.

Joseph Costa



Joe has been with the Waring-Sullivan and Rock Funeral Homes for the last seven and half years, filling many positions and capacities while assisting in the care and compassion for the families that they serve. Over the last 35 years, he's been able to volunteer with some amazing organizations, such as the Chamber, Rotary, Lions, Durfee Alumni, Fall River Symphony and Citizen's Scholarship Foundation and Wreaths Across America. Growing up in Fall River and having parents as mentors that were involved in the community, taught me to place a high value on relationships, especially when asking for referrals, advice or assistance with fundraising, scholarships or serving on a board. However, Joe's greatest joy and accomplishment is continuing to raise his three beautiful children, Zachary, Julia and Sarah.

Lisa LeBreux



Lisa's usually the first person to step up and lend a helping hand. She has been active in the Community for a long time and enjoys giving back. She has many years of experience in Health Care and Marketing. In her current role, as Marketing Director of River Falls Senior Living, she helps older adults start a new chapter of their life in an Assisted Living setting. She has formed so many wonderful relationships over the years. During her tenure as President of the Fall River Rotary Club (2019-2020), Lisa was instrumental in starting the "Blessing Bag Project." This project gets toiletry items into the community through various organizations in the Fall River community. Lisa is also a past president of the American Business Women's Association, an Ambassador for the One Southcoast Chamber, Little Compton Wellness Board, East Bay Chamber, Southcoast Health Ambassadors, and many other networking groups.

Robert Flynn



Robert Flynn's journey began when he became a Boy Scout with Troop 4 in Bristol, R.I. In the early 1960s, he was inducted into the Order of the Arrow, where he embraced the principles of Wimachtendienk, Wingolauchsik, and Witahemui, the brotherhood of cheerful service to others. These values became his guiding principles and continue to influence him to this day. In the late 1960s, Flynn joined the Navy, eventually rising through the ranks from Seaman to Command rank before retiring in 1996. Throughout his naval career, he remained closely connected to scouting, leading several Navy-sponsored troops. In 1977, after returning to New England and settling in Swansea, MA, Flynn transferred his American Legion membership from Norfolk, VA, to American Legion Post 3034 in Swansea. It was there that he met Mr. Frank Crook, and together, they were determined to revitalize Troop 40 Swansea. Since the late 1970s, Flynn has continued to be an active member of Troop 303, and one of his greatest sources of pride is the 86 Eagle Scouts who have come through the various troops he's been involved with, including Troop 4 Bristol, Troop CG-12, Troop DLG-16, and Troop 303. Flynn and the scouts also honor veterans by decorating cemeteries, placing flags on veterans' graves each year.

Bill Burns



William Burns has spent his entire career serving our community. Born, raised, and still living in the City of New Bedford, Bill has dedicated his life to enhancing the South Coast. After graduating from Bentley College, Bill started his career as an Auditor in the Massachusetts Department of Revenue before serving as Senator Mark Montigny's Chief of Staff for 14 years. After years of public service at the State Level, Bill shifted his focus to serving his community at the local level, spending five years in the Mayor of New Bedford's office serving as Scott Lang's Chief of Staff. In August, he celebrated his 10th year at Southcoast Health, serving as the Executive Director of External Affairs, Government Affairs & Planning, where he has worked tirelessly to advocate on behalf of their patients to ensure that our community can receive the best possible healthcare right here at home. Bill has volunteered countless hours serving on boards, including One SouthCoast, the Z, and People Inc.



**Chamber 101:
New Member Orientation
OSC Fall River Office
Fall River, MA**



**SERVPRO Business After Hours
End of Summer Bash
SERVPRO
New Bedford, MA**



**Business Builders Breakfast
Chick-fil-A
Fall River, MA**



RECENT EVENTS



**September Job Fair
Venus de Milo
Swansea, MA**



**Valcourt Outstanding Citizen
Award Dinner
Whites of Westport
Westport, MA**



**Grand Opening/
Ribbon Cutting
Viva Fall River Visitors Center
Fall River, MA**



**Business Builder's Breakfast
Ground Floor Coffee
New Bedford, MA**



**Grand Opening/
Ribbon Cutting
Pickle Ball & More
Dartmouth, MA**



RECENT EVENTS



**Hatch Street Business After Hours
Hatch Street Studios
New Bedford, MA**



**Chowderfest
City Pier 3
New Bedford, MA**



Fall River Innovators
Fall River, MA 02724
(857) 251-2998
www.fallriverinnovators.org

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www.teachUCPR.com

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What is More than medicine?

To Jennifer, More than medicine is **Freedom**.

Freedom to change course.

Freedom to move forward.

Freedom to live.

To us, More than medicine is having the team who went above and beyond to give Jennifer — and her heart — a second chance. It's having our team perform one of the first-in-the-nation procedures that undoubtedly gave Jennifer freedom from a life of repeated surgeries.

Is Jennifer lucky? No, but she is a Southcoast Health patient, and we are lucky to care for her.

Opioid Settlement Funds



FALL RIVER MASSACHUSETTS

The City of Fall River is pleased to announce that the Fall River Public Schools and the Advocacy Fund are the beneficiaries of opioid settlement funds. The two grants totaling \$66,200 will work to address two of the priority areas identified through a comprehensive community engagement initiative: supporting people in treatment and recovery and prevention efforts. The funding provided to these organizations will increase their capacity to support Fall River students, individuals, and families who have been impacted.

The Fall River Public Schools (FRPS) were awarded \$36,360 and will purchase a school

health curriculum to be used in FRPS, Atlantis Charter School, Argosy Charter School, and Diman Vocational Technical High School. This will allow students across the community to have a cohesive and consistent health education program. In addition, a community wide speaker presentation is included in the proposed budget to unify and engage the community around this new curriculum.

The Advocacy Fund was established to address the urgent needs of individuals affected by substance use disorders. With additional funding the Advocacy Fund seeks to

continue to support individuals by providing basic needs (hygienic supplies, harm reduction supplies) support individuals with rental and utilities support, assist with sober living costs, and provide financial support to impacted families and/or assist with funeral expenses.

The City of Fall River Opioid Settlement Advisory Committee continues to review applications submitted during the primary round of grant opportunities. Fall River expects to receive almost \$8 million in settlement funds through 2038. These funds will focus on substance use prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery support in the community.



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Member Spotlight: Healthfirst Family Care Center Inc.



387 Quarry Street, Suite 100
Fall River, MA 02723



HealthFirst Family Care Center, Inc. (HealthFirst) is a non-profit, federally qualified community health center (FQHC) located in Fall River. For more than 50 years, HealthFirst has provided adult and pediatric primary care services that include medical, oral health, social services, and limited medical specialty services for all residents, including the underserved and uninsured, of the Greater Fall River community.

HealthFirst's mission is to provide the highest quality healthcare to everyone in our diverse community. We work diligently to educate the community on the programs and services available to them both within HealthFirst and the Greater Fall River community. We continue to host our annual BlockParty Palooza where backpacks are distributed to school aged children and HealthFirst


staff and partner agencies are onsite to schedule appointments, distribute information and help individuals of all ages with the services they may need. We partner with Tufts HealthCare to provide an annual Fresh Food Event where fresh fruits and vegetables are distributed to all attendees. In addition, HealthFirst staff can be found tabling at more than 30 community-based events in the Greater Fall River area. At these events we help community members learn and obtain health insurance and provide information on the different services available at HealthFirst.

HealthFirst has received several notable awards and recognitions. They were honored with a citation recognizing their 50 years of service in the Greater Fall River Community. In 2023, HealthFirst was ranked in the Top 5 among the 52 Mas-


sachusetts League of Community Health Centers for hypertension control, diabetes control, and cervical cancer screening. Additionally, they were ranked in the Top 10 for colorectal cancer screening and breast cancer screening.

"It is essential for HealthFirst to be part of the One SouthCoast Chamber because so many people in our area don't know the full scope of the services we provide. HealthFirst's state-of-the-art facility provides members of the chamber, their employees and families, and everyone in the Greater Fall River area a one-stop-shop for all of their medical, dental, behavioral health, and pharmaceutical needs in one location. Being a member of the Chamber allows us to connect with other members and further our reach in the community." - Healthfirst

(508) 679-8111
healthfirstfr.org

 facebook.com/Healthfirster1

 instagram.com/healthfirstfallriverma/

 linkedin.com/company/healthfirst-family-care-ctr/

Child & Family Services, Inc. Wins 'Mental Health Organization of the Year' Award



Child & Family Services is the proud recipient of the MaMHCA's 2024 'Mental Health Organization of the Year' award. This annual award honors organizations that promote mental health through various methods, including fostering a healthy workplace culture, offering innovative mental health services in Massachusetts, implementing impactful programming, creating positive environments for clinicians, and supporting and recognizing the professionalism of Licensed Mental Health Counselors (LMHC).

Since 1981, MaMHCA has been advocating for the advancement of the highest quality mental health services and the mental health counseling profession through public policy initiatives for both mental health professionals and consumers of mental health services. The association works for the advancement of the mental health counseling profession by promoting licensure, education, legislation, and public policy initiatives for

both professionals and consumers.

This prestigious honor stems from a beautifully crafted nomination from a valued CFS staff member, and of course our dedicated staff for inspiring her heart-felt words. Denise Galford-Koepfel, LMHC (Clinical Team Leader & Licensed Play Therapist) wrote: "I have not worked long at this agency, but I have already seen how the employees all have a passion for the support of employee mental health. By caring for its workers at all sites, the agency creates a warm and inviting environment that is often full of laughter. The clients they serve are then the recipients of this warmth and kindness. Child and Family Services provides CBHI, SU support, adoption, outreach and more. Staff appreciation is not just once a year. It happens at staff meetings, on the fly, in supervision and at community events. The agency works to be creative in supporting clients and staff. It provides innovative programs to prevent challenges in our youth. Staff look

forward to being here. They arrive early and stay late. Staff check in on one another. Management really cares and call out to staff by name. This agency is about caring for the workers who care for our community in hard times and in celebration of the journey."

CEO Wendy Botelho proudly accepted this award on the agency's behalf during a formal ceremony on October 4th at the Courtyard by Marriott in Marlborough, MA. In addition to this award, the MaMHCA provided the agency with three complimentary admission passes to their Annual Conference to be used by our clinical staff members. We'd like to thank the association for their dedicated efforts in the mental health field, particularly for acknowledging organizations like ours that prioritize a supportive workplace for both staff and clients.

Child & Family Services, Inc. is a private, nonprofit, human service agency that provides adoption services, mental health counseling, psychiatry, and specialized support programs to people of all ages living in Greater New Bedford, Greater Fall River, Cape Cod, Lawrence, Florence, Plymouth, Worcester, and Waltham. Whether it is children exposed to abuse or violence, families coping with mental illness, or matching children with mentors or loving adoptive families, Child & Family Services is there to support, guide and heal. We have been helping people since 1843 and continue to fulfill our mission "...to heal and strengthen the lives of children and families."

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