

City Beats

To see your event in the City Beats section, email ahenderson@turley.com with the date, time, place and function schedule. All submissions are due by noon the Wednesday before publication.

Annual tax abatement workshop scheduled

HOLYOKE - The fourth annual Property Tax Abatement Workshop, sponsored by the Holyoke Ward 5 Republican Committee, will be held Saturday, Jan. 9 from 10 a.m. to noon at Holyoke Community College in the PeoplesBank Conference Center, Kittredge Building.

According to the event moderator Linda Vacon, the goal is to educate taxpayers as to the proper methods for filing for an abatement with the Assessor's office if the taxpayer believes the city has overvalued their property. The appeal process, in the event an abatement request is denied, is also reviewed.

The workshop includes a PowerPoint presentation by Keith Davis and there will be related forms needed to file for an abatement, Vacon said.

"This year we have added a new section to our workshop about tax rates and how they relate to home values, business values and the overall budget," she said. "Some of the taxpayers who attended our previous workshops have saved hundreds of dollars," she added.

The forum is a free gathering open to Holyoke and surrounding communities' taxpayers. Refreshments will be served. For more information, please contact Keith at 413-533-4258, or by e-mail at sodasdad@yahoo.com.

Volunteers needed to play with homeless children

REGION - Horizons for Homeless Children is seeking volunteers to interact and play with children living in family, teen parent, and domestic violence shelters in Western Massachusetts. A commitment of two hours a week for six months is required. We offer daytime and evening shifts, so there is likely to be one that fits your schedule. It is a rewarding and fun experience for everyone involved. The next training session will be on Jan. 30, 2010 in Springfield, MA - for Playspaces in shelters in Springfield, Holyoke, Pittsfield, North Adams, Amherst, Northampton, and Greenfield.

Please contact Jessica Netto for information or to register for training at 413-532-0526 or jnetto@horizonsforhomelesschildren.org.

Please visit our website at: www.horizonsforhomelesschildren.org.

Wistariahurst Gift Shop features new book

HOLYOKE - Wistariahurst Museum is proud to feature "Nothing But Our Best": A Holyoke Industrialist & His Company - a new book documenting the history of the National Blank Book Company in Holyoke.

Read from local author Dick Towne's point of view, the story of his grandfather's travels from San Francisco, CA, to Amherst, New Hampshire, New Jersey and Holyoke. Towne welcomes you into his family history, inviting you to the Towne dinner table in the early 1900's in Holyoke, the factory floor with working class residents of Holyoke in the late 1900's and early 20th century, and the board room of National as they decide who is the best partner for a merger.

It is not often that readers get a

glimpse into the life of a man who ran a company for 50 years through the eyes of his grandson. Join Towne as he explores his family's history and illuminates the inner workings of a medium sized company in an industrial mill town. Books can be acquired at the Wistariahurst Museum Carriage House Gift shop.

Calling all Irish young women for Colleen pageant

HOLYOKE - The Saint Patrick's Committee of Holyoke, Inc. will present their Grand Colleen Pageant, with a chance to win a \$500 scholarship and trip for two to Ireland, on Saturday, Jan. 9, 2010 at 7 p.m. at the Peck Middle School, Northampton Street, Holyoke.

Eligibility requirements include:

- Female
- Single (never been married or never had a child)
- No less than 17 years old by March 17, 2010 and a senior in high school; nor more than 22 years old by March 17, 2010
- Resident of Holyoke or South Hadley, MA
- Must claim Irish ancestry
- Completion of resume

Entries must be mailed by Monday, Jan. 4, 2010. The five finalists will be selected on Jan. 9, 2010. These finalists will be honored at the Grand Colleen Ball on Feb. 20, 2010, where one will be selected as Grand Colleen. The Grand Colleen will receive numerous gifts from local donors, a scholarship and a trip to Ireland for two presented by the St. Patrick's Committee of Holyoke.

Visit www.HolyokeStPatricksParade.com for more information and to download an entry form. All entries must be sent to Kathryn Dulchinos, 71 Hearthstone Terrace, Chicopee, MA 01020. For more information call 413-592-4945. Immediate family of the Grand Colleen Pageant Committee are ineligible.

Calling all artists

CHICOPEE - Art applications are now available in all branches of the Chicopee Library for the sixth annual "Fine Art Friends Art Exhibit" to be held March 1 through April 3, 2010 in the Henry J. Bazan Community Room of the Emily L. Partyka Central Branch at 449 Front Street in Chicopee.

The event is sponsored by the Friends of the Library and funded in part by a grant from the Chicopee Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

Professional artists as well as accomplished amateurs from the region who are age 20 or older are invited to participate in this popular annual exhibit. Every entry will be exhibited however, the Fine Art Friends Committee reserves the right to exclude artwork that it considers unsuitable for viewing by the general public.

For further information you may contact Nancy Michon at nmichon@charter.net or Francine Jasinski Hayward at jasinadvertising@comcast.net or your may call the Friends Office, 594-1800, 116.

New or gently coats and blankets for the needy

HOLYOKE - Providence Ministries is in great need of new or gently used coats and blankets. Coats are needed for adults and children of all sizes. All items will be distributed to the needy in the Holyoke community. All items can be dropped off at Margaret's Pantry Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. or at PMN offices any day anytime.

Volunteers go beyond Bingo

HOLYOKE - When Mount Holyoke College students arrived at Renaissance Manor on Cabot to volunteer, they dove right into Bingo, snacks, and developing personal relationships with residents.

Bingo was fun, but the volunteers were ready to take their quality time with the residents to the next level.

So the trio of pre-med students developed an exercise program for seniors that integrates psychological, social and physical elements. The weekly activity will incorporate therapeutic movement, music and social time.

"We will do wheelchair exercises that are cathartic," said junior Rosalind Mandelbaum, a psychology major and prospective neurosurgeon. "It's not like teaching an aerobics class where you do exactly what the teacher does. We will encourage movement and talk about how we feel when we move a certain way."

Mandelbaum was inspired in part by her mother, who teaches wheelchair yoga, as well as by a course she took called Community Crossover, in which she taught dance to seniors. She said a creative approach empowers the residents, while encouraging stretches and movement helps them stay healthy, strong and coordinated.

The activity, especially when music is introduced, also has social aspects: "The music in particular leads to storytelling, which is also therapeutic," said Mandelbaum. "Firsts are good - remembering your first dance, or where you were the first time you heard this song." These social interactions and reminiscences are vital to the well-being of seniors in long-term care.

In fact, you don't have to study to be a neurosurgeon in order to be a good volunteer. Sometimes, all you really need is ears.

"I have made a good friend who is a bit hard of hearing," said fellow student Leah Dion, a senior biology major who hopes to attend osteopathic school next year. "I help him when the numbers are called, and I chat with him too. There is lots of time to sit around and talk." With someone there whose only "job" is to lis-



Turley Publications photo submitted

Four student volunteers, Zahra Hanif, Isis Kayiga, Rosalind Mandelbaum and Leah Dion admire the work of Sally Labelle, a resident who went home just last week after therapy at Renaissance Manor.

ten, the residents tell many stories. Dion's friend talks about the animals on the farm where he grew up.

Volunteering helps the residents, but there are benefits for the students as well. Dion notes that any sort of community service is perfect career preparation for her. "Osteopathy is a more holistic approach to medicine, and community service is part of the philosophy," she said. "They really stress volunteering." She hopes to work in an under-served rural area after finishing osteopathic school.

Aside from career prep, volunteering can be rewarding in other ways as well. The Corporation for National and Community Service has found that people who volunteer at least two hours a week realize significant mental and physical health benefits, including increased longevity and lower rates of depression.

Renaissance Manor on Cabot, a member of Revera Health Systems, offers short-term care and therapy after surgery or illness for adults of all ages, as well as long-term, respite and hospice care. For more information, visit www.reveraCabot.com.

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