

Ashland High Students Unite to Clothe the Homeless

By CYNTHIA WHITTY

The Ashland High School club, Breaking the Barriers (BTB), partnered this holiday season with nonprofits, Hammer & Chisel, an Ashland-based group that provided admin support, and Net of Compassion, a Worcester group that provided the site for a street store. The groups opened a street store, which served hundreds of people in need of clothing and personal care products in downtown Worcester.

"The street store is a pop-up clothing shop for the homeless where they are served with dignity and respect, instead of receiving handouts that might not fit correctly or they might not like," Neha Shabeer, BTB co-president and a founder, said. "On Saturday, December 15, 25 BTB student volunteers spent the day acting as shopping assistants guiding homeless through the shop, helping them find what they were looking for, and showing care by listening to their stories."

"It was a day filled with joy felt by both students and the homeless we served," Shabeer added. "BTB collected over 200 bags of clothing, shoes, blankets, new feminine products and new



socks/underwear with a month-long clothing drive at Ashland High School, town hall and Faith Community Church. Our effort was also supported by the Ashland Cub Scouts and MetroWest Youth Teaming Together. The Ashland community truly united in this effort!"

BTB was founded in May 2016 by Ashland high students Neha Shabeer, Haley Boccuzzi, Stephanie Moscaritolo, Selma Chamime, Annabelle Rutherford and Elizabeth Cahill. The community service and leadership club follows the motto, "be the change you wish to see in the world." BTB has had success spearheading the school's first international service trip to Cape

Town, South Africa, in February 2018, a leadership program for rising middle-schoolers, and a shadowing program for high schoolers.

BTB has been inspiring youth to serve the community by participating in an Intergenerational leadership team, volunteering at soup kitchens, planning regional substance abuse prevention events part of MetroWest Youth Teaming Together, attending the National Youth Leadership Institute training at the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) conference in Washington, D.C., leading Hammer & Chisel's Strike Action Network, and assisting their partner, Decisions at Every Turn Coalition.



"We are a club interested in spreading our message to all aspects of the high school community, by actively working to make partnerships with other clubs and sports teams. We strive to be a blend of leaders from the Ashland High School community," Shabeer said.

The 25 student volunteers who participated in the holiday pop-up store were: Haley Boccuzzi, publicist and co-founder (2019), Samantha Boccuzzi (2022), Pleiade Brown (2022), Jaylin Carlin (2021), Anna Caruso (2022), Julia Caruso, treasurer (2019), Selma Chamime, co-founder (2019), Neeharika Chanda (2019), Rebecca Benedictis (2021), Izzie Gerber

(2021), Cici Govan (2022), Emily Henault (2020), Lili Hellerman, co-president (2020), Maddie Klepper (2021), Emily Lombardo (2021), Justin Madison, (2019), Abby Marando (2021), Stephanie Moscaritolo, co-founder (2019), Shekinah Oliveira (2021), Lily Orr, secretary (2019), Molly Orr (2022), Shreeya Patel (2020), Neha Shabeer, co-president and co-founder (2019), Nayonika Singh (2022), and Kayla Soldi (2019).

BTB would like to thank Lindsay Hogan (BTB faculty advisor), Dorian Botsis (COO, Hammer & Chisel), and Bill Fredericks (Director, Net of Compassion) for helping make the street store possible.

Brain Health, and More: Ashland Senior Center

By CYNTHIA WHITTY

Program highlights at the Ashland Senior Center, 162 W. Union St. (Rt. 135) for the month of February are:

Feb. 8 & 22: Knitting, 10 am

Feb. 11: Hearing Aid Cleaning, 9:30 am

Feb. 14: Soup Day, 11:30 am

Feb. 18-22: Random Acts of Kindness Week

Feb. 19: Never too OLD for Hula Hoops, 1:30 pm

Feb. 21: Brain Health Assessment, 12:30 pm

Feb. 27: Larry Lowenthal, 1 pm

Random Acts of Kindness Week: February 18-22

Join us for Random Acts of Kindness Week at the senior center!

- Post on a Gratitude Wall. Post what are you grateful for today
- Draw examples of random

acts of kindness or illustrate what kindness means to you

- Donate towels and blankets for the pet shelter
- Write a postcard to a neighbor
- Say 'hello' to three new friends at the center
- Bring someone to the senior center to try something new
- Write a thank you note 'just because.'

Brain Health Assessment from Cogniciti: Thursday, February 21, 12:30 pm and 1:30 pm

Are you 60 to 90? Get your free brain health score. Each older adult takes a Brain Health Assessment on a laptop that is provided. The assessment only takes 15 to 30 minutes. Time afterwards allows those from Cogniciti to provide adults with the best tips on brain health and answer any questions about memory concerns they may have.

Space is limited. RSVP at the office or call 508-881-0140 x1.

Great Decisions Discussion Program: 2nd Monday of each month, March through November, 7 pm, Ashland Library

If you are curious about politics, social and cultural norms, historical precedents and national and foreign policy, this in-depth discussion group is for you. Created by the Foreign Policy Association of America in 1954, the program provides background information and policy options for the eight most critical issues facing America each year. Open to all ages. Sponsored by the Friends of the Ashland Public Library and Ashland Senior Center. The topic for March 11 is "Global Migration." For more information, contact Kim Kotob at 508-532-7955 or kkotob@ashlandmass.com.



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