

Community Giving & Events

By John Petrin, Town Manager

The Town operates a food pantry out of the Youth and Family Services Department located in the Community Center building. Cara Tirrell and Tammy Griffin do an amazing job with its day-to-day operation. The items that are distributed from the food pantry are collected through various donations from many areas. For example, this past weekend, the Postal Service conducted its annual food drive. The items collected from the various houses in Town were brought to the food pantry to restock shelves. During the year, we get various donations from groups and individuals to keep our pantry shelves filled with needed items.

Your donations and willingness to help those in need are critical in maintaining the food pantry. I would like to highlight one of these groups that make it all work. Cookingham Greene, an active 55+ condo community in Town, makes various donations to Town needs. These residents graciously collect food and funds to benefit the food pantry, campership scholarships, summer camp lunch program, holiday adoption program, Children's Library Summer Reading Program and other great programs. We are grateful to these residents who give so much of their time and funds. If you are interested in how they do it, please feel free to contact Cara Tirrell at Youth and Family Services for further information.

Ashland is truly fortunate to have two Lions clubs in Town. Both clubs volunteer time to various people in Town. I know that I have written about this in the past but I continue to be overwhelmed by their generosity. My wife and I attended the Ashland Lions Annual Chowderfest. Congratulations to Trackside Grille for their first place finish. As you can see, I like my chowder and it was a fun way to down chowder from six great restaurants. I am also interested to see the results of the first annual Ashland Pride Poster Contest to be conducted at the Mindess School. I was sorry to miss the Greater Ashland Lions ham and bean dinner last month. I love beans but my wife was happy to see that I had another engagement and could not attend.

This year's Cleanup Ashland/Earth Day on May 1st was a great success. The weather was gorgeous and allowed the volunteers to get down to earth and cleanup many areas. Thanks to the Board of Health and their staff, Mark Oram and Diane Mortensen for coordinating the event. Several Town departments and organizations set up information booths. Thanks to the DPW Department for picking up the trash bags scattered around Town.

Town Meeting was had on May 5th with 97 out of 10,500 registered voters attending the annual legislative session. Thank you to these hardy voters for their time. Hopefully we have a better than 10% turnout at the annual election.

We once again had over 25,000 runners come through Town on Patriots Day with the Boston Marathon. Thank you to the Police, Fire, DPW and Animal Control Department for all their efforts that day. The DPW once again had 135 looking great for the event. Thank you to Doug Small for staying on. That is one person I really do not want to have to replace. Congratulations to Scott Motyka and Mark Purple, Town employees, for completing the 26.2 mile run. I know I could have completed the .2 portion before forgetting about the remaining 26 miles.

Memorial Day is approaching. This day is set aside to honor those who have died in the service of their country. The day was first known as Decoration Day and dates back to the end of the Civil War. Today, we honor all veterans and recognize veterans who have passed away during the prior year. Ashland pays its respect through the Memorial Day Observance and Parade. It starts at Wildwood Cemetery with a ceremony and concludes at Gordon Green Square. Various organizations participate to pay honor. Thank you to all who serve and have served.

Memorial Day also means the opening of summer season. That means Summer Concerts, sponsored by the Ashland Day Committee, are right around the corner. I can't wait for the weekly Tuesday night event. I always enjoy the evening activity with great people and music.

Please remember the Food Pantry for donations of food and household goods. Donations can be made by dropping off items at public buildings such as the Post Office. Your consideration is appreciated. Please

also consider a financial donation to **The Ashland Emergency Fund**, at P.O. Box 112, Ashland, MA 01721. The Fund supports residents in need and the Food Pantry.

To follow what is happening in your community, follow the events and happenings in the MetroWest Daily News and WACA-TV as they provide superb coverage. Our website at www.AshlandMass.com has been recently revamped. There is much information on the site for you to peruse. We are the recent recipient of the Common Cause Massachusetts 2010 e-Government Award with Distinction for our website. We are proud recipients of their highest award.