

GLoucester Daily Times

The Salem News

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# REAL NEWS IN SCHOOLS

**NIE** NEWSPAPERS IN EDUCATION

September 10, 2025

## SLUSH PARTY

First responders invite children to celebrate new school year

MANCHESTER-BY-THE-SEA — The town's fire station was overrun by students on Aug. 28 — there by invitation of the Manchester-by-the-Sea Fire and Police departments.

The town's first responders hosted a Back to School Slush Party for the town's schoolchildren at the fire station to celebrate the previous day's start of the new school year.

There was line for the free slush, handed out by firefighters with an assist from fire Chief James "Jake" McNeilly and police Sgt. Ryan Machain and Lt. Mark McCoy.

Also on hand was Daisy the comfort dog and her handler, School Resource Officer Andrea Locke.



DAVID SOKOL/Staff photos

From left, Manchester-by-the-Sea police Sgt. Ryan Machain, fire Chief James "Jake" McNeilly, and police Lt. Mark McCoy hand out slush to students during a Back to School Slush Party at the Manchester-by-the-Sea Fire Station.



Dante Bruno, 13, and Trevor Laspsa, 13, sit on the curb.



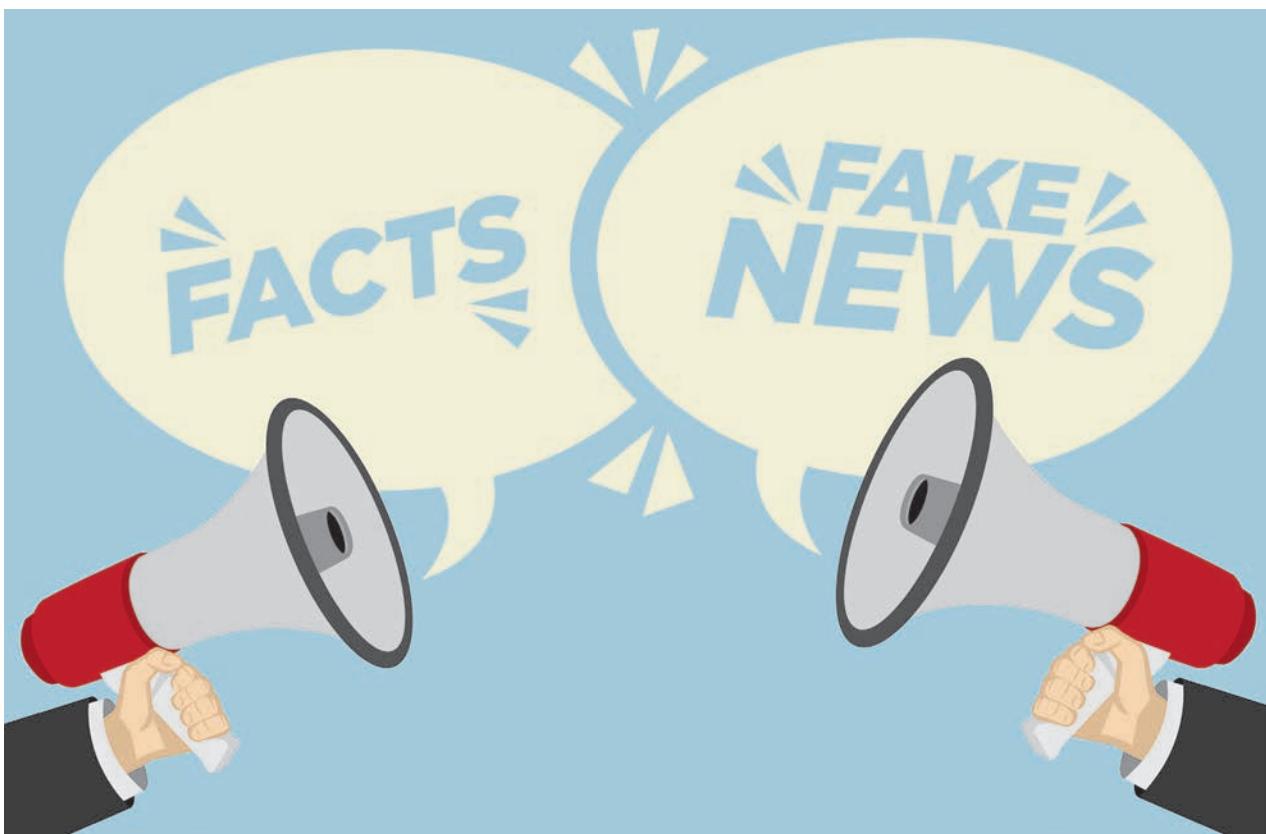
Manchester-by-the-Sea resident Jesse Pino sits with her daughter Zumi, 5, as she enjoys a slush.



Students hang out outside the Manchester-by-the-Sea Fire Station during the Back to School Slush Party.



Police Sgt. Ryan Machain hands a slush to Jack Wilson, 12.



## Looking to combat fake news?

Here are some resources to help you determine if what you've read is true:

» **Politifact** is the Pulitzer Prize-winning fact checking operation run by the nonprofit Poynter Institute. The site fact-checks statements by politicians and debunks myriad Facebook hoaxes.

<https://www.politifact.com/>

» **FactCheck.org**, run by Annenberg Public Policy Center, performs much of the same tasks, and also lets you ask questions of the fact checkers. An example question: Did the Supreme Court rule that it is illegal to take the oath of office with anything but the Bible? (The answer is no.)

<https://www.factcheck.org/>

» **Snopes** is the original fact-checking website. Use the site's search bar to get to the bottom of political statements, viral videos and urban myths.

<https://www.snopes.com/>

» **A Google reverse image search** is the best way to find out if that photo you saw making the rounds on Twitter or Facebook is real. This story from PC Magazine walks you through how to do it on your desktop or your phone.

<https://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2492468,00.asp>

» **Still need help?** Contact us at the Gloucester Daily Times or Salem News, and we'll get the answer for you, no matter the topic. Email Gloucester editor Andrea Holbrook at [aholbrook@gloucestertimes.com](mailto:aholbrook@gloucestertimes.com), or Salem editor John Castelluccio at [jcastelluccio@salemnews.com](mailto:jcastelluccio@salemnews.com)



## REAL NEWS IN SCHOOLS

### How the program works

Your school can have access to local, trusted journalism from The Salem News and Gloucester Daily Times on a daily basis. We report on news throughout the North Shore and Cape Ann, covering all things local — from schools, to sports, to government, people profiles, business, entertainment and more. You get the facts — the real news — from experienced reporters, photographers and editors you can count on at no cost to your school.

Here are the basics of the program:

**What is it?** The Salem News and Gloucester Daily Times partner with local businesses to provide free digital access to our newspapers to anyone within a school in our coverage area at no cost to the school. This access encourages students to value the vital news coverage being produced by The Salem News and Gloucester Daily Times. They will build awareness and gain critical thinking skills in the process.

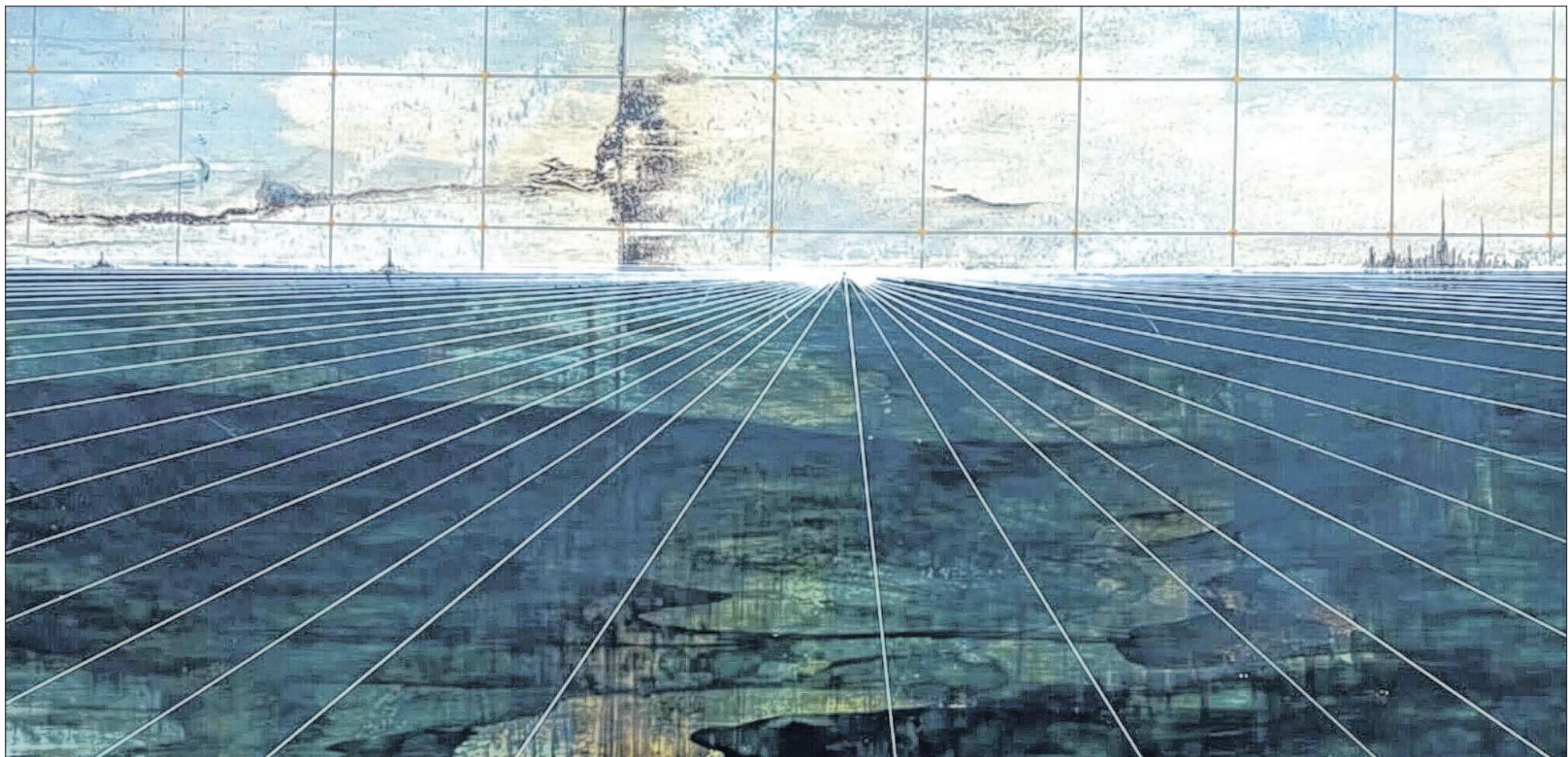
**Who can participate?** This program will benefit teachers, students, and others in the school community.

**Where does it take place?** You can access our newspaper online. Teachers can incorporate the program into their curriculums, even having reporters, photographers and editors visit your class.

**When can we start benefiting?** As soon as we have your commitment to participate in Real News in Schools we will go to work to find a local business who wants to sponsor you. Once we have one, we will work with your IT Department to get the program up and running.

**Why is this valuable?** There's a lot of fake news out there on social media and elsewhere. The Salem News, founded in 1880 as The Salem Evening News, and the Gloucester Daily Times, founded in 1888, both award-winning publications, have long track records of fair and accurate reporting that cuts through the misinformation.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**  
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COURTESY PHOTO

Perri Howard's "Lost Legends Outbound" is one of the works in the Rock Neck Art Colony exhibition "Navigating Art & Science." A public reception with the artists and light refreshments will be 4-6 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 14. This event is free to the public.

## New initiative boosts art and science in Gloucester

By Ethan Forman

• Staff Writer

A new volunteer initiative fired up by a couple of Gloucester ceramics artists called Stand Up for Art & Science aims to promote the intersection of art and science in America's oldest seaport.

This new initiative, orga-

nized by Gloucester residents and ceramic artists Barbe Ennis and Jennifer K. Brown, is a citywide collaboration of organizations presenting cultural and educational events supporting artistic and scientific endeavors this fall.

Its goal is to heighten the awareness of Gloucester's rich tradition of having working artists and their contribution to responsible management of its natural resources, according to a statement.

"It's a big thematic tent with room for the wealth of Gloucester-based

organizations, galleries, and businesses," Ennis said in a statement. "By promoting a variety of independent events together, we aim to attract a diverse group of visitors of all ages from Gloucester and beyond, to exhibitions, performances, and events linked to the theme of Stand Up for Art & Science."

"By organizing Stand Up for Art & Science in Gloucester this fall," Brown said, "we hope to raise awareness of the connections between the city's past, present and future as an island nurtured by the ocean, interpreted and celebrated through art and science."

Participating organizations are Art Haven, COSMOS Gallery, The Cultural Center at Rocky Neck, Gloucester Marine Genomics Institute, Gloucester Writers Center, JDG Gallery, Lane's Coven and Playwright Ken Riaf, on their Stand Up for Art & Science Initiative this September. We are committed to supporting the thriving art community here on Cape Ann through our innovative scientific research."

MAGMA, Manship Artist Residency, Maritime Gloucester, Moxie Gallery, Rebecca Nagle/Cripple Cove Studios, and Ocean School Collective. At least three of the organizations participating in Stand Up for Art & Science — GMGI, the Rocky Neck Art Colony, and Art Haven — have ongoing partnerships with the Gloucester schools, Brown said.

"GMGI has a deep respect for the arts and its fascinating intersection with science," GMGI Executive Director Bonnie Fendrock said in an email. "We are thrilled to support Barbe Ennis, a long-time GMGI supporter and friend, and Jennifer K. Brown

In addition, you can catch the seven-week exhibit "Navigating Art & Science" at The Cultural Center at Rocky Neck, 6 Wonson St., now through Oct. 13. An opening reception is scheduled

4-6 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 14. Helen Duncan about Arts Honors students acting as docents for the show

The exhibit coincides with Stand Up for Art & Science. "Navigating Art & Science" features eight artists who are deeply involved in scientific inquiry and activism. Exhibiting Artists are Resa Blatman, Daisy Braun, Georgie Friedman, Perri Lynch Howard, Michelle Lougee, Michelle Samour, Jessica Straus, and Christopher Volpe.

While local scientists search for ways to help ocean species be more resilient to survive the rapidly changing marine environment, these artists alert to the predicament, are creating art with urgent messages for stewardship and action," according to the Rocky Neck Art Colony.

Brown said the exhibition's curator, Cynthia Roth, has been in touch with Gloucester High School arts educator

Helen Duncan about Arts Honors students acting as docents for the show

The exhibit coincides with Stand Up for Art & Science.

"While all the work in the exhibition has been created in response to human impact on the environment, in addition, several of the artists have been inspired by expeditions to the Arctic Circle and Greenland and residencies in marine laboratories on Cape Ann and beyond," according to a statement from the Rocky Neck Art Colony.

To find out more about Stand Up for Art & Science and see what's going on with art and science here this fall, you can go to the initiative's landing page at Discover Gloucester's website at <https://discovergloucester.com/artandscience/>.

Ethan Forman may be contacted at 978-675-2714, or at [eforman@northofboston.com](mailto:eforman@northofboston.com).

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# Peabody offers free mental health app

By Caroline Enos

» Staff Writer

PEABODY — The city is partnering with a mental health app to support all residents and their families, especially students of Peabody Public Schools.

Bloom is a mental health and wellness platform that can be accessed on desktop computers and as a mobile app on a smartphone. Developed by Gloucester-based Bloom-Ed Inc., the app provides local resources on topics ranging from mental health, parenting, financial wellness, end of life care and in a special section for teens, support for kids experiencing bullying.

All Peabody residents can use the platform for free, as can their family members even if they don't live in the city.

"The Bloom App is an effective way of reducing barriers to accessing care by making use of the technology that most people have in front of them every day," Mayor Ted Bettencourt said. "I'm extremely pleased that the city is able to offer this product and service to our residents and families."

Bloom is one new prong of a citywide response to mental health crises and bullying after the death of 14-year-old eighth-grader Jason Bernard, who died by suicide on May 17 after facing bullying at the Higgins Middle School.

"The city really wanted to be proactive in prevention, but also in providing equitable access," Bloom-Ed Co-Founder and CEO Joanne Mercaldi said.

The city paid \$25,000 for the first year's subscription to Bloom, which is now active. The app's services focus on mental and behavioral health, mindfulness, parenting and eldercare, and personal wellbeing.

A major draw: Bloom offers one month of free online therapy through BetterHelp for those 13 and older.

"It's usually a four-to-six week waiting period to get a mental health provider, so we

**Peabody Residents:** Email [hello@BloomForAll.com](mailto:hello@BloomForAll.com) for your Access Code

COURTESY OF KAREN CONANT/Bloom

bridge the gap," Mercaldi said. "If somebody loves the service, they're able to continue at a lifetime discount of 15%, which equals about \$60 a session. So it's providing a very equitable, affordable rate for care."

Bloom also has services to connect residents of all ages to psychiatry care that is covered by Medicare and about 10 major health insurance providers, including Optum (United

Healthcare, Oscar Health Insurance, Oxford Benefit Management), Cigna, MassHealth, Aetna, Point32 Health, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts and Quest Behavioral Health.

The platform also publishes newsletters and can easily connect users with local organizations and information about upcoming community events. There are tools for those seeking help with substance abuse recovery, and live group coaching and workshops hosted by

experts in a variety of mental health and wellness areas.

Bloom also features an Ask the Expert section where users can ask healthcare professionals questions on various topics in real time.

Bloom has equipped Peabody schools with stigma-free resources that can be provided to students and further support them outside of school, Mercaldi said.

"The schools are really well supported with psychologists," she said, "but they were really concerned about the support available outside of the walls of the school."

The app's teen portal provides just that, Mercaldi said. The section of Bloom's platform has tips, tools and strategies to understand bullying, access digital resources, improve and understand relationships and physical health, and support for teen's mental health.

A "Take Control" tool kit created by the Center for Humane Technology aims to help teens navigate real-life issues that can affect their mental health, like FOMO (fear of missing out) or regrets about what they post on social media.

"Everything a child is going through, we have resources for them that are comprised from the nation's health experts, as Bloom has over 350 partners," Mercaldi said.

The partnership with Bloom will provide mental health support for the entire Peabody schools community, Superintendent Josh Vadala said.

"For parents and for members of the community, right at your fingertips, you can download the app on your phone or access it on a desktop or laptop computer," he said. "It's very user friendly."

Bloom isn't the only new mental health support being

rolled out this year. A new Student Resources and Support Center opened at the Higgins Middle School on the first day of school Tuesday.

Located in its own space between the main office and the nurses office, the center has three recently hired full-time clinicians who specialize in mental health services and can support students dealing with a myriad of issues, especially those who have been affected by bullying.

The city originally planned to only hire two full-time clinicians through the organization Family Continuity, which recently merged with the mental health and substance abuse organization Advocates. But Peabody was able to bring on a third clinician through Embrace Pathways, a Peabody-based mental health services organization, Bettencourt said.

Students can schedule

appointments or drop by the clinic Monday through Friday. The city also intends to offer after-school counseling for students, Bettencourt said at the first of three mental health workshops for parents this summer.

"The new center is ready to go, and we're excited for that service and support for our students," Vadala said.

Peabody has also created a new anti-bullying task force that meets on a regular basis to improve and monitor such resources and programming in Peabody, and is working with other mental health organizations to improve its response to mental health issues and bullying.

For Peabody residents interested in signing up for Bloom, email [hello@BloomForAll.com](mailto:hello@BloomForAll.com) for your access code.

Contact Caroline Enos at [CEnos@northboston.com](mailto:CEnos@northboston.com).

# Essex Tech's Larkin Center opens for business

By Buck Anderson

» Staff Writer

DANVERS — With the cutting of the ribbon at Essex Agricultural & Technical High School's brand-new Larkin Center in mid-June, a project that has been in the works for more than five years has finally come to fruition.

The building was in its "imagination" stage prior to 2019 — when plans were drawn up for the site of the 1950 Larkin Cottage — thanks to the foresight and backing of school supporter Robert Wood of Danvers.

The old lime-green Larkin was demolished in early 2020, and work began on the new Larkin during the early days of the COVID pandemic.

On June 18, with the building virtually complete, the elegant new Larkin Center opened to the public with speeches, refreshments, tours and a ribbon-cutting.

Akram Mchiti, a senior in Essex Tech's Information Technology Services Program and State Vice President of SkillsUSA, introduced Secretary of Education Patrick Tutwiler to give the keynote address.

Tutwiler recalled the dedication of Catherine Marie Larkin, for whom the building is named, "whose dedication to service will serve as a model and inspiration for now and in perpetuity."

Larkin, a Salem woman, who studied home economics at Essex Agricultural High School, enlisted in the U.S. Army Nurse Corps at the start of WWII. In March 1945, 1st Lt. Larkin was on a plane to Calcutta, India, with 14 other female nurses, to establish a base hospital when her plane went down in bad weather killing all aboard.

"So what's the story here?" Tutwiler asked, "Simply put, students and adults who helped rebuild the Larkin learned how to build a house.

"They learned carpentry, they learned HVAC maintenance, they learned



DAVID SOKOL/Staff photo

**Faculty and invited guests take part in a ribbon-cutting Wednesday during a ceremony for the newly opened The Larkin on the campus of Essex North Shore Agricultural & Technical School.**

construction path labor and they learned horticulture and landscaping — and they learned these vital skills

are making sure the training lies with the real needs of the economy.

He spoke of "the buzz happening here" because of the pathways and "partnerships with local unions and local work force training partners, where students and adults are gaining hands-on experience, industry-recognized credentials, and a clear roadmap to good jobs."

He spoke of "the buzz happening here" because of the pathways and "partnerships with local unions and local work force training partners, where students and adults are gaining hands-on experience, industry-recognized credentials, and a clear roadmap to good jobs."

Superintendent-Director Heidi Riccio invited the audience to take a moment to reflect on how special the day was "for our school, our students, and our entire community."

"The Larkin represents more than just a beautiful building," she said, "it is a tribute to our past, a celebration of collaboration, and a promise for our future."



DAVID SOKOL/Staff photo

**Superintendent Heidi Riccio shows off the state of the art electrical room to Secretary of Education Patrick Tutwiler Wednesday during a tour of The Larkin basement during a ribbon-cutting ceremony at Essex North Shore Agricultural & Technical School.**

School is where you  
build the foundation  
for the rest of your life.

We can relate.



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