

Itsy Bitsy franchise continues to expand

HOLYOKE – The Itsy Bitsy franchise continues to expand at Holyoke Community College. For the second year in a row, students in Professor Sheryl Civjan's Psychology of Women class have taken up the college's "Itsy Bitsy" theme for a campus-based community service project. Last fall, Civjan's students created the Itsy Bitsy Closet, transforming a storage room next to the college's Itsy Bitsy Child Watch Center into a family-friendly resource room full of donated books, clothes, and other children's items, all free to HCC student-parents.

This semester, they put together five Itsy Bitsy Stations, containers of children's books, games, small toys, art supplies, and other items, that student-parents can access to occupy their kids when visiting certain campus offices, in particular: Financial Aid, Admissions, Advising, English as a Second Language, and the HCC Library.

"Some college offices can be difficult to go to for appointments when you have kids," said Civjan. "These boxes will give kids something to do while they're parents are waiting."

Civjan said the idea came from staff at the Itsy Bitsy Child Watch.

"Students have shared that they are sometimes self-conscious when they are bringing their kids into campus offices," said Emily Webber, director of the itsy Bitsy Child Watch, a free drop-in service for HCC student-parents. "This is an effort to make the campus feel more inclusive to student-parents and families. Having little play stations helps people feel more welcome. I talked to Sheryl about that, and her students took the idea and ran with it."

The idea for using "Itsy Bitsy" as the title for early childhood programs at HCC started in 2020 when, during the pandemic, HCC educators created a series of video interviews for early education students and professionals (the Itsy Bitsy Zoomcast). The theme grew into a title for a new suite of early education classrooms modeled after preschool and kindergarten facilities (the Itsy Bitsy Learning Lab). The Itsy Bitsy Child Watch opened in 2022, followed last year by the Itsy Bitsy Closet, and this year by the Itsy Bitsy Stations.

Civjan's students put together three containers for the HCC Library, each targeting different age groups.

"We found that students who have children don't always have a safe, comfortable place where they can sit and feel like they're not intruding on another person's space," said Rebecca Hardy, administrative assistant for the HCC Library. "So, we wanted to make sure that the students who do have children feel welcome and that their children have things to do to keep them quietly engaged."

Student Olivia Jolley of South Hadley, whose team prepared boxes for the Admissions Office, said the project ties in directly to the themes of the class, and although



she does not have children herself, Jolley said some of her classmates do. "One had a baby a couple of weeks ago," she said, "and she's a single parent."

Webber said she appreciates the hard work Civjan's students put into their projects.

"I think it's an ongoing partnership," Webber said. "I don't know what will come next, but they do amazing things. The Itsy Bitsy Closet has been a great success. Students come by every day. Hopefully this will have a similar impact."

Obituary

Rick A. Psholka 1961-2024

Rick Adam Psholka, 62, of Worcester, MA passed away in his home on Nov. 28th, 2024.

He was born in Holyoke, MA in 1961, to his parents Rhoda and Carl Psholka from Agawam, MA. Rick attended Agawam Public Schools, and worked at Six Flags New England for several years.



He is survived by his sister Deena and brother Ted, many nieces and nephews, aunts, and uncle. His cousin Denise dedicated time and patience to care for him and make sure he was in attendance at family events.

Rick loved visiting with his nieces and nephews and their children, seamlessly fitting in as "one of the kids". He was always reading, journaling, or keeping in touch with others through texting or social media.

The family will be holding a private Celebration of Life.

Rick was an animal lover. In his memory, please donate to a local animal shelter.

Virtual support groups for those with cancer

During a cancer journey patients and their families often benefit from the support of others. Virtual support groups are being held now and through 2025, by Camille St.Onge, LICSW and oncology social worker.

For many years, people had to travel to a predetermined location to attend cancer support group meetings. As a result of restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic virtual support groups began meeting entirely online, with participants joining through video conferencing platforms like Zoom. Today, many people prefer this method because it offers flexibility, and convenience, and allows them to access support from where they are without needing to physically travel to a meeting location.

"Sharing concerns with a support group can be a beneficial way for people facing cancer to get the help they need to cope with the physical and emotional concerns that arise during and after a cancer diagnosis," said St. Onge. "While support and self-help groups can vary

greatly, groups share one thing in common, they are a place where people can share personal stories, express emotions, and be heard in an atmosphere of acceptance, understanding, and encouragement."

The support groups are designed to help patients, their families and caregivers cope with the challenges of a cancer diagnosis.

Virtual Support Group offered include: General Cancer Support Group: first Wednesday of each month, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; Partners in Caregiving: second Wednesday of each month, 5 to 6:30 p.m.; Expressive Writing through Cancer, third Wednesday of each month, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.; Breast Cancer Support Group, fourth Wednesday of each month, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

All meetings are currently held virtually and are made possible by funds raised by the Walk of Champions. For more information contact Camille St.Onge, LICSW, Oncology Social Worker by calling 413-239-7239 or by email at cstomagin@gmail.com.

Public Notices

AGAWAM ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the Agawam Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a public hearing at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main St., Agawam, MA, on **Monday, January 13, 2025 at 6:30PM** for all parties interested in the request of Elmira Usmonova, who is seeking a Special Permit in accordance with the Town of Agawam's Zoning Ordinances, Ch.180-8, Paragraph B, to allow for a 6-foot fence within the front setback at the premises identified as 28 S. Alhambra Circle.
Doreen A. Prouty
Chairperson, ZBA
12/12, 12/19/2024

AGAWAM ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the Agawam Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a public hearing at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main St., Agawam, MA, on **Monday, January 13, 2025 at 7PM** for all parties interested in the request of Katelin Grasseti, who is seeking a Special Permit in accordance with the Town of Agawam's Zoning Ordinances, Ch.180-23(K), to allow for the keeping of hens at the premises identified as 220 Line Street.
Doreen A. Prouty
Chairperson, ZBA
12/12, 12/19/2024

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for all LEGAL NOTICES...

All Papers Will Deadline Thursday, Dec. 19 at Noon for Publication Dec. 23-27

Happy Holidays!

Happy New Year!

All Papers Will Deadline Friday, Dec. 27 at Noon for Publication Dec. 30-Jan. 3

Agawam Advertiser News

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One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place.

The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$225, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice and may include a photograph. **Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

Exceptions will be made only when the family provides a death certificate and must be pre-paid.

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- 3 Find a quick link to the state of Massachusetts' public notice web site to search all notices in Massachusetts newspapers.

Public notice deadlines are Mondays at noon, Fridays noon for Monday holidays.

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