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# Front Porch News from Plainville and Wallingford

By **Ciara Hooks**, Staff Writer

June 26, 2026



The Silver Dolphins of Naval Submarine Base New London retire the Brothers of Frederick Franklin Lodge No. 14's old flag during a Flag Day ceremony June 14, 2026, at the Masonic Temple in Plainville.

Courtesy of Andy Bronson



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## Freemasons of Plainville hold special Flag Day event

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PLAINVILLE — The Brothers of Frederick Franklin Lodge No. 14, Freemasons of Plainville, retired the lodge's old flag during a Flag Day ceremony earlier this month.

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The Silver Dolphins of Naval Submarine Base New London helped the organization retire its old flag June 14 at the Masonic Temple in Plainville.



Members of the Silver Dolphins of Naval Submarine Base New London during the flag-retiring portion of a Flag Day ceremony held on June 14, 2026, at the Masonic Temple in Plainville.

Courtesy of Andy Bronson

Members of the lodge delivered patriotic readings as the new flag was raised.

American flags that were handed out to the guests at the celebration. Guests were also welcomed to the lodge's dining room after the event for an informative lecture regarding the history of the American flag.



A lecture on the history of the American flag was held after a Flag Day ceremony June 14, 2026, at the Masonic Temple in Plainville.

Courtesy of Andy Bronson

To learn more about Frederick Franklin Lodge No. 14 and Connecticut Freemasonry, visit [frederick-franklin14.org](http://frederick-franklin14.org).

**63rd annual ringing of the bell in Wallingford**

WALLINGFORD — The Wallingford Historical Society will hold the 63rd annual ringing of the Old Town Hall bell on July 4, to coincide with the town's America250 celebration.

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The event will begin with a picnic at noon on the lawn at the Samuel Parsons House, 180 South Main St. Attendees are asked to bring a picnic lunch, a blanket or a chair.

Following the picnic, the bell-ringing ceremony will begin at 1:30 p.m. with the reading of the Declaration of Independence and Gov. Ned Lamont's July 4 proclamation. The bell will then be rung 13 times, in honor of the 13 colonies, at 2 p.m.

The Parsons House will be open for viewing until 3 p.m.

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## **Plainville awards teacher, paraeducator of the year awards**

PLAINVILLE — Plainville Community Schools honored a Louis Toffolon Elementary School preschool teacher with the 2026-27 Teacher of the Year award.

Rachel Valentine, who has served in the preschool teacher role for the past nine years, was nominated at the building level by her colleagues, Anastasia Speakman and Elspeth Hayden.

To receive a nomination and consideration, the applicant must demonstrate the school district's core "Portrait of the Graduate tenets," including being collaborative, communicative, innovative, mindful and resilient, and this must be showcased through their peer's submissions.

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Plainfield School Superintendent Brian Reas and Plainville Community Schools' Teacher of the Year Rachel Valentine during the district's reception and special awards presentations program on June 8, 2026.  
Courtesy of Lynn Davis

Valentine joined Emily Wasley of Plainville High School, Erin Georgini of Middle School of Plainville, Meghan Ray of Frank T. Wheeler Elementary School and Jill Mullins of Linden Street School as the building-level teachers of the year. Valentine

opted to move on to the district-level process, where she was interviewed by a selection committee.

"I am truly honored to accept the Teacher of the Year award for Plainville Community Schools," Valentine said. "It is a privilege to be part of such a dedicated and supportive community of educators, students and families. This recognition reflects the collaborative spirit of our schools and the joy I find each day in helping my students learn and grow."

Valentine has been a faculty member for 22 years, working with students in preschool, kindergarten and first grade. She is the treasurer of the Toffolon Sunshine Club, an active member of the school community through the district's Multi-Tiered System of Supports team and as the teacher representative to the Toffolon School PTO. She has also mentored new teachers and was a volunteer on both the Plainville Soccer Board and Little League Board. She holds a bachelor's degree in early childhood education and sociology and applied sciences from Eastern Connecticut State University and a master's degree in elementary education with a focus in reading from Central Connecticut State University.

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The district also chose Linden Street School paraeducator Tina Melanson as the Support Staff of the Year.

Valentine and Melanson were both honored during the PCS Celebrations Reception and Special Awards Presentations program held June 8. Each district teacher of the year will be individually recognized later this year by the state Department of Education.

“Rachel and Tina exemplify the caring and student-centered educator, and PCS is fortunate to have this caliber educator,” Superintendent of Schools Brian Reas said.

## **Plainville Community Fund awards more than \$14K to local groups**

PLAINVILLE — The Main Street Community Foundation, through its Plainville Community Fund, recently awarded more than \$14,000 in grants to local organizations to enhance the lives of Plainville residents.

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This year marks the 20th anniversary of the fund, which was established as a community endowment in 2006 by a group of community leaders in Plainville. The fund is fueled by donations from individuals, families and businesses. Since its inception, the fund has distributed a total of \$175,000 to support local nonprofits.



The Main Street Community Foundation recently celebrated 20 years of the Plainville Community Fund and awarded over \$14,000 to Plainville nonprofits.

Courtesy of Main Street Community Foundation

“Every dollar donated to the fund and every dollar granted through the fund benefits local nonprofits that help the residents of Plainville and raises the town’s quality of life,” said MSCF President and CEO Susan Sadecki. “For 20 years, the Plainville Community Fund has supported positive change in the community in a variety of ways.”

Those awarded this year include:

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- Plainville Community Food Pantry, \$1,000 for its Intervention, Outreach and Referral Program, which provides food and other basic needs for Plainville residents.
  - Plainville Public Library, \$1,250 for its Discovery @ Your Library program to purchase children's citizen science kits. The kits, which will be available to lend, will allow patrons to participate in real-world research to extend STEM learning, foster environmental awareness and strengthen science literacy.
  - Chrysalis Center Inc., \$1,500 for Promoting Independent Living for Homeless Older Adults in Plainville residing in the HEARRT House, a permanent supportive housing program for those living with mental illness and substance use disorders. The funding will support recreation and wellness supplies.
  - Plainville Community Schools, \$1,500 for its Nourish to Flourish Parent and Child (K-5) nutrition classes, which teach families how to prepare healthy, budget-friendly meals using fresh, local ingredients while also providing recipes and resources to support nutritious eating at home.
  - Congregational Church of Plainville, \$1,500 for its "CCP Presents" concert series, which features a variety of music and creative arts performances.
  - Plainville Senior Center, \$1,714 for its Healthy Harvest Initiative to launch a community garden program. The program is designed to promote social connection, nutrition and overall wellness among older adults.

- Plainville Wind Ensemble, \$1,775 for its 2026-27 concert series to support a single performance.
- Plainville Early Learning Center, \$1,875 for its summer enrichment program, which serves 80 preschoolers. The funding will support its in-school presentation and activities providing safe, engaging opportunities that promote continued learning and social-emotional development.
- Pequabuck River Watershed Association, \$2,000 for its Kern Park north culvert planting program. The program allows for Plainville High School AP environmental science students to partake in a hands-on project focused on stormwater remediation and planting. An additional \$1,030 grant from the Merriman Family Fund at MSCF also supported this project.

For more information on the Plainville Community Fund or Main Street Community Foundation, visit [mainstreetfoundation.org](https://mainstreetfoundation.org). To donate, visit [mainstreetfoundation.org](https://mainstreetfoundation.org) or send donations to Main Street Community Foundation, P.O. Box 2702, Bristol, 06010.

## **Plainville Community Schools offer summer meals**

PLAINVILLE — Plainville Community Schools will provide free summer meals to children 18 years and younger.

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The meals are available at different sites, including:

- Linden Street School, 69 Linden St., June 29 through July 30, from 8:45 to 9:15 a.m. for breakfast and 10:50 to 11:15 a.m. for lunch.
- Plainville High School, 47 Robert Holcomb Way, June 29 through July 30, from 8:15 to 8:45 a.m. for breakfast and 11:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. for lunch.
- Norton Park, 1-15 Norton Park Road, June 29 through Aug. 7, from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. for lunch.

The program is made possible through the district's participation in the federally funded Summer Food Service Program.

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For more information, contact Plainville Community Schools at 860-793-3200.

*Send your Front Porch News item, including contact information, to [frontporch@record-journal.com](mailto:frontporch@record-journal.com).*



**Ciara Hooks**

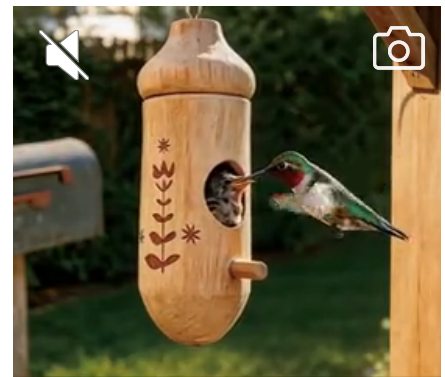
STAFF WRITER

Ciara Hooks is a reporter with the Record-Journal. She has been with Hearst Connecticut Media Group since 2024. When not working, she can be found trying out the many great restaurants in the state, shopping, listening to music and spending time with family.

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