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Front Porch News from Wallingford, Meriden, Southington, Cheshire, and Plainville

By **Ciara Hooks**, Staff Writer

April 18, 2026



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Front Porch News from Wallingford, Meriden, Southington, Cheshire, and Plainville

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The Congregational Church of Plainville, UCC to host the Infinity Saxophone Quartet



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PLAINVILLE— The Congregational Church of Plainville, UCC will host their C.C.P. presents... Music & Creative Arts series featuring the Infinity Saxophone Quartet.

The group will take the stage at 3 p.m. on April 19 at the church, 130 W. Main St., where they will play music incorporating jazz standards, contemporary classical, big band, folk, ballads and popular music.

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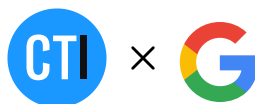
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The Infinity Saxophone Quartet features soprano, alto, tenor and baritone saxophones. The group was founded by retired music educator Rich Szulczewski in 2025.

The event will include refreshments.

It's free but a free-will offering is appreciated.



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For more information about the performance sponsored in part by a grant from the Elizabeth H. Norton Trust, contact the Church Office at 860-747-1901 or churchoffice@uccplainville.org or visiting uccplainville.org.



The Infinity Saxophone Quartet will perform at Congregational Church of Plainville, UCC's C.C.P. presents... Music & Creative Arts series on April 19, 2026, at 3 p.m.
Courtesy of The Congregational Church of Plainville, UCC

Gallery 53 Spring art classes

MERIDEN— Gallery 53 has two new spring classes where community members can learn to draw and paint.

Classes for the Intro to Watercolor Painting and Intro to Drawing Workshop, guided by art instructor Cheryl Napolitano, began last Tuesday.

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The six-session watercolor painting course will teach participants about the different tools, techniques and tricks. Napolitano will provide a guide the artists through classical techniques and experimentation to both keep them engaged and growing throughout the course. It takes place 1 to 3 p.m. on Tuesdays through May 19.

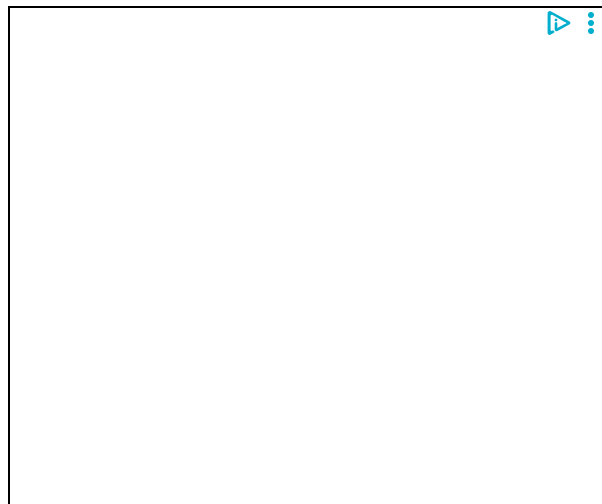
Those who sign up should bring their smock, but a materials list is provided.

During the six-session drawing course, artists will learn to use charcoal and graphite pencils. Napolitano will teach the basics of the tools and techniques of sketching and best ways to use them. It takes place from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. on Wednesdays through May 20.

Gallery 53 is located at 53 Colony St. For more information or to register, visit gallery53.org.

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Celebrate Earth Day at Masonicare at Ashlar

WALLINGFORD— Masonicare at Ashlar Village is hosting its exposition-style Green Fair event, where residents and community members can celebrate Earth Day.

Attendees can gather from 1 to 3 p.m. on April 22 in the Knapp Auditorium to explore the different ways the Ashlar Village community partakes in protecting the environmental and sustainable living.

The event features various groups, including NexTrex, the OP SHOP, LR Enterprises and the Xerces Society, who will offer materials and answer questions.

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For more information, call Kerry Hatch, Ashlar Village's manager of leisure & learning, at 203-679-6017 or email khatch@masonicare.org.

First Baptist Church's Spud Night & Silent Auction

SOUTHINGTON— First Baptist Church of Southington will host Spud Night & Silent Auction from 5:30 to 7 p.m. on April 25 to help raise funds for three church ministries.

The event, which will be hel

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d at the church at 581 Meriden Ave., features baked potatoes with an array of toppings including cheese, broccoli, bacon and more or “garbage can.” There will also be themed-baskets and other gift items in the silent auction.

Tickets are \$9 per baked potato, which includes a beverage and dessert. Tickets are available at the door and takeout is also available.

For more information, visit firstbaptistsouthington.org or the church Facebook page at First Baptist Church – Southington, CT.



Terry Gomez Lombardi, a Southington resident and retired executive/community volunteer who was elected as one of the new **Main Street** Community Foundation Board members at the Annual Meeting in March 2026.

Courtesy of the **Main Street** Community Foundation

Main Street Community Foundation celebrates over 30 years

Main Street Community Foundation celebrated 31 years at the annual meeting last month by looking back at their 2025 accomplishments, hearing from local organizations and adding new members to the team.

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The foundation awarded more than \$2.7 million in grants and scholarships last year that were distributed to benefit the residents of Bristol, Burlington, Plainville, Plymouth, Southington and Wolcott. To date the foundation has awarded more than \$33.6 million since its inception in 1995 and received \$4.9 million in contributions, according to the press release.

The foundation heard from LiveWell President and CEO Michael Smith, one of the many local organizations they support that strive to improve the quality of life in Central Connecticut. Smith shared how the organization is creating a community focused on brain health. The FINGER-based Cognitive Wellness Clinic based at LiveWell, was recently awarded a grant from the Barnes Memorial Trust by MSCF. According MSCF its the first of its kind in the United States.

The foundation also added two new board members as they gear up for another year of grant writing. The first board member is Terry Gomez Lombardi, a Southington resident and retired executive and community volunteer. The second is Keith Bernier, senior region manager for Webster Bank and a Bristol representative.

Five key officer positions were announced as well. The new chair of MSCF is Kathryn Reinhard. William Micari is the new vice chair, Kyle Biddick is the secretary, Mark Moriarty is the treasurer and Daniel Daigle moved into the position of past

chair. The foundation's board consists of community leaders charged with ensuring donors' intentions are fulfilled in perpetuity.

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For more information, visit [mainstreetfoundation.org](https://www.mainstreetfoundation.org).



Main Street Community Foundation celebrated 31 years looking at their 2025 Annual Meeting in March of 2026.

Courtesy of Main Street Community Foundation

Southington Land Conservation Trust receives grant for new project

SOUTHINGTON— The Southington Land Conservation Trust was awarded a \$30,000 grant from the Bradley Henry Barnes & Leila Upson Barnes Memorial Trust at the Main Street Community Foundation that will be used to restore and develop its newest land acquisition.

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The organization was awarded the “Healthy Trails and Habitat Project” grant that will be used to restore and develop the 60-acre Lovley Preserve donated by local developer Mark Lovley in 2025 and named after his father.

“We are proud to support the Southington Land Conservation Trust with their project to increase the community’s access to Southington’s natural resources,” said President & CEO of Main Street Community Foundation Susan Sadecki. “The trust is committed to supporting programs that improve health outcomes for the residents

of Southington. The Southington Land Conservation Trust's restoration and development of the Lovley Property will support healthy outdoor access for Southington residents for years to come."

The grant will allow the land trust to initiate work immediately on the piece of property located on the western side of town near Mt. Vernon on Welch Road.

"We have had foresters and botanists survey the preserve, and now we can begin to implement some of the areas they outlined and prioritized, such as invasives removal," said Southington Land Conservation Trust President Val Guarino.

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The trust plans to remove invasive species, make the trails more accessible to the public and add interpretive and educational signage, trail markers and kiosks.

"We are beyond words. It's an amazing gift," said Southington Land Conservation Trust Board Member Alissa Nelson, who wrote the grant. "We are so fortunate to receive this large land donation and to then be awarded the **Main Street** Community Foundation grant is just remarkable. We are so thankful."

The **Main Street** Community Foundation is a nonprofit that acts as a local hub for philanthropy, looking to enhance the quality of life for both present and future generations in the communities served.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Connecticut recognize Meriden woman

MERIDEN— Big Brothers Big Sisters of Connecticut recently recognized a Meriden high school teacher during Women’s History Month in March, who has a lineage of helping others.

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Big Sister Amy Brazauski, 31, was recognized by BBBSCT for her work in the program and in the community. Brazauski has been mentoring Little Sister Olivia for nearly four years. The duo was matched through the community-based program in 2022 and cultivated a relationship grounded in trust, creativity and consistent support, BBBSCT said in a press release. They spend their time together visiting art museums, painting pottery, creating mosaics, exploring nature and more.