

# West Bloomfield

## T O D A Y



### Inside

Connect  
Community  
Center

Police  
Co-Responder  
Program

Storm Tips

2026 - First Quarter

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# From the SUPERVISOR

## Big Changes to 2026 Household Hazardous Waste Recycling and Shredding Events

**W**EST Bloomfield Township has a long history of caring for its environment. We know that even small things like basic litter and trash can accumulate in our wetlands and waterways, and over time create significant impact.

All HHW events, May 1 and 2, and September 19 and 20, 2026, will now be held at the Jewish Community Center (The J), located at 6600 West Maple Road, rather than the traditional venue at West Bloomfield Town Hall. This location offers more accessibility, more space and room to expand these popular events.

At the same time, we are merging our recycling events with our popular paper shredding opportunities. As a reminder, this is for any household paper, rather than business and commercial shredding, and can include sensitive documents like bank statements, old tax records, medical files, and junk mail that you don't feel comfortable tossing in the trash.

Residents in West Bloomfield and surrounding communities, including Keego Harbor, Orchard Lake and Sylvan Lake, can bring their items (see the full list on page 15) ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to contribute to a cleaner, safer environment.

Separately, West Bloomfield Township will now help boat owners recycle their boat wraps. Request a bag from Town Hall, fill it with your boat wrap, and drop it off at Town Hall or Bloomer Park Boat Launch between April 1-May 31.

For those unable to attend the scheduled events, West Bloomfield Township offers a special voucher program in partnership with ERG Environmental Services. Residents can request vouchers that allow them to drop off household hazardous waste at ERG's facility in Livonia, providing year-round flexibility.

For more information, event schedules and voucher requests, visit the township's website or contact the Development Services Department at (248) 451-4818.

Jonathan Warshay  
Township Supervisor



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# Constructing the FUTURE OF RECREATION

By Abby Burgess, Community Engagement Coordinator for WB Parks

**T**HE Connect Community Center is beginning to take shape on the Civic Center Campus! West Bloomfield Parks (WB Parks) is thrilled to begin the construction process of our new, multi-generational community center. Connect will serve as a gathering place for all ages and has been designed to be four times larger than the existing Recreation Activities Center to better meet the community's growing demand for programs and services

WB Parks is excited to create a singular space for all recreation needs, conveniently consolidating community services to the Civic Center Campus. Upon opening of the community center, the leased space currently serving as WB Parks' senior center will relocate and close.

Maximizing the space previously occupied by the Recreation Activities Center, the new building will feature updated amenities and programming spaces. The 48,000-square-foot building will include:

- A dedicated lounge space for seniors to gather and socialize in as well as have opportunities to enjoy the activities they have come to love at our current Connect Senior Center.
- Many amenities tailored to the interests of West Bloomfield's growing population of older adults, such as indoor pickleball, table tennis, a walking track, fitness classes designed for seniors and more.
- A wider variety of recreation programs focused on both the mental and physical wellbeing of participants of all ages.



- More nature education offerings with a new, expanded outdoor natural play area, an interactive nature exploration area and more live animals to inspire individuals to appreciate and learn about the natural world.
- Expanded meeting and event space options and more!



The nature of community.

Spearheading the Connect Community Center project is WB Parks' Executive Director Kelly Hyer. When asked about the impact this development will have on the community, Hyer shared: "We know this space will have a positive impact on our community for generations to come."

Of the impending construction process, she stated that WB Parks "can't wait to begin building the new multi-generational Connect Community Center. Our residents have been asking for an additional community gathering space and these amenities for a long time. It has taken us several years of community engagement, planning and design to reach this point."

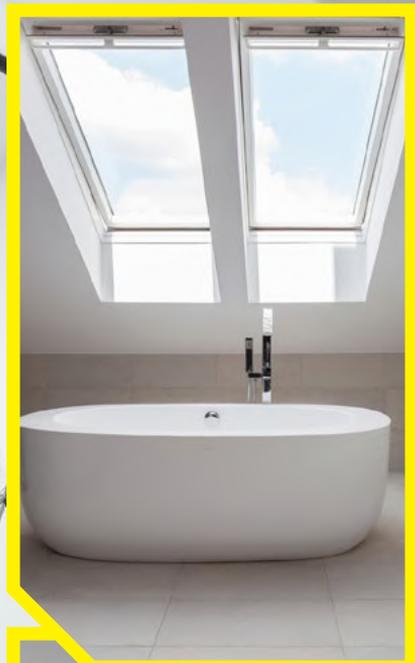
Demolition of the Recreation Activities Center is set to begin in early spring, with an official groundbreaking to be scheduled once the site has been cleared and leveled.

Construction of the Connect Community Center is estimated to conclude toward the end of 2027, with a grand opening slated for early 2028.

For more information and to view renderings of the new facility, visit [wbparks.org/connect](http://wbparks.org/connect).



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# Someday Starts Today For Joel Lewis II

## OCC is the smart first step in becoming a teacher

**I**T'S almost as if Joel Lewis II was destined to end up at OCC, and not just because he hails from the southwest Detroit area. Joel's greatest fan, and mentor — his mom — set the example by earning her associate degree at OCC, as did his sister.

Joel took his family's guidance to heart, but his career choice was still in question. A small part of him still wanted to turn his love of English and writing into a career as an advertising copywriter.

That is, until he had a life-altering conversation with an academic advisor at Wayne State University.

"She sized me up pretty quickly and recommended I check into OCC to begin my undergrad course work. She explained how OCC has a very straight-forward and student-friendly approach to financial aid, scholarships and transfers to other institutions. The Michigan Transfer Agreement facilitates the transfer of credits from OCC to schools like MSU, Oakland University, University of Michigan, or

in my case Wayne State."

Joel took the sage advice from mom and enrolled at OCC. It wasn't long before he settled into student life.

"Having the flexibility to take online and in-person classes really fits my situation. I'm able to balance substitute teaching, coaching Special Olympics basketball and taking classes at OCC without the specter of life crushing student loan debt hanging over my head."

Another aspect of the OCC experience Joel really appreciates is the deeper connection he enjoys with his instructors, and with the course material.

"The smaller, more intimate class sizes at OCC allows instructors to make the class material relevant to each student's individual journey.

And no one personified this approach more than my Fundamentals of Speech instructor,

Dempsey Harrison III, who really takes the time to make the course material personally relevant to each student and their respective situation."

Joel is well on his way to achieving his ultimate goal of becoming a middle school English teacher, a role he believes will give him the opportunity to help shape young minds and serve as a role model for children, particularly those of color.

"Seeing an educated black man at the head of the classroom at such a young and impressionable age can have a profound impact on how kids see themselves and the opportunities available to

them. It wasn't long into my OCC experience that I felt I was locked into exactly what I'm supposed to be doing...which is to help these impressionable, young kids try to reach a level they don't even know is possible yet."

Joel Lewis II is on schedule to complete his course work and transfer by the fall of '24, and thanks to OCC and all of his hard work and dedication, his "Someday" is fast approaching.



**Learn why OCC is a great place to start your someday. Join a campus tour or virtual admission event. Visit [oaklandcc.edu/getstarted](https://oaklandcc.edu/getstarted)**

---

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## SPOTLIGHT

# PRESS START

## Inside Andy Duff's Retro Gaming World

By Ryan M. Place

**E**ACH year, the Detroit Retro Gaming Show sends waves of video and computer game nostalgia throughout the region. And you have Andy Duff to thank for it all.

Andy lives in West Bloomfield with his wife, Sevan Karadolian Duff, and from the moment you step into their home, it's clear he's serious about gameplay.

"My entire basement is an arcade," he said. "Pinball machines, vintage consoles and cartridges, artwork, vinyl records. Every era of gaming is represented here."

That philosophy is at the heart of the Detroit Retro Gaming Show, which Andy founded in 2021. Originally held at the Livonia Elks Lodge under the name Detroit Retro Video Game Show, the event has grown to over 2,000 attendees.

"It fills the 28,000-square-foot Southfield Pavilion each November," he said. "Over 50 vendors selling retro games, consoles and gear. And we're starting a new event – the Ann Arbor Gamefest – in the spring, expanding the community even further."

For Andy, the show is beyond mere buying and selling.

"It's about families," he said. "Parents



bring their kids to show them what they grew up with. People discover things they've never seen before, including prototypes, rarities and homebrews. You take the headset off, get out of the house and connect with real people, live in-person."

The event features curated exhibits, including a display of famously ill-fated 1990s consoles.

"Atari Jaguar, TurboGrafx-16, Philips CD-I, Sega 32X," he said. "The failures are just as interesting as the successes. They tell an important part of the story."

Andy's dad is from Minnesota and his mom is from Mount Clemens.

"I grew up in Waterford," he said. "Graduated Waterford Mott High School. Then I attended MoTech Automotive Education Center in Livonia and worked as a mechanic throughout the 1990s. Later, I transitioned into IT after studying at Baker College, and worked in IT until about a year ago."

Along the way, Andy was also a DJ, a skill he feels has been diluted by modern DJ software.

"The art of blending and transitioning vinyl records was mostly lost with the rise of digital computers," he said. "Spinning New Wave vinyl will always be my favorite."

Gaming, though, has been a mainstay.

"The Atari 2600 changed my life," Andy said. "And the PlayStation 3 in 2006 was another turning point. It wasn't just a console, it was a Blu-ray player, a media hub. It showed where things were headed. I own every PlayStation from 1 through 5."

A big fan of physical media, Andy hopes to add vinyl records to his shows.

"I love physical media," he said. "It commits you to the experience more. I even had over 2,000 CDs before I reluctantly digitized them to save space."

In 2014, Andy and Sevan moved to West Bloomfield and quickly fell in love with the area.

"It's centrally located, close to family and has everything we need," Andy said. "Favorites include Mezza, Nino Salvaggio and J. Alexander's, and I love cruising around on my Vespa GTS 300."

When they're not home, the couple spends time at their cottage in Coleman or up at Higgins Lake on their 20-foot Crownline Bowrider.

For Andy Duff, whether it's gaming, music or community, the real high score isn't found on a screen, it's found in bringing people together.

"That's the magic," he said.



# West Bloomfield Library Annual Report



2025



2000



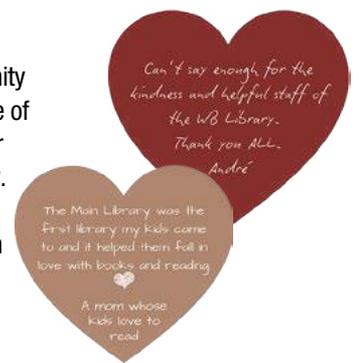
## Letter from the Director

2025 was a year of projects and progress. Our priority was to start implementing pledges we made to the community during the 2024 millage proposal. Chief amongst those pledges was building, technology, and collection improvements. The articles in these pages describe our accomplishments in those areas. The work continues in 2026 and beyond, and we will keep you updated every step of the way.

We also celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Main Library building! The community joined in the festivities and shared their Library Love with us. Please enjoy a couple of the comments we received—the library staff and I certainly did! We appreciate our community so much and the way you support your library invigorates us every day.

*Cathy Russ*  
Executive  
Library Director

There is a lot to anticipate in 2026, including the 25th anniversary of the expansion of the Westacres Branch. We look forward to bringing you the best services, collections, programs and spaces in 2026, and we can't wait to see you.



# Improvements to Library Spaces

The library began work on capital improvement projects promised in the library's 2024 millage proposal.

**The Main Library marked its 25 year anniversary** while completing several major planned replacement projects. The adult area was recarpeted. Exterior improvements included a roof replacement and repairs to copper and wood siding. HVAC upgrades also addressed longstanding heating inconsistencies.

**New furniture was added to support visiting families in the youth area** at both branches. A balance bar and sensory boards were added to the Westacres Activity Center to engage the library's youngest visitors. At the Main Library, a new chair was added to help caregivers monitor and engage with children by the popular playhouse and light table area.

**The Main Library opened the Comfort Room**, a lactation and sensory-friendly space next to the family restrooms. The room includes acoustic panels and a rocking chair, floor seating, sink, sensory toys, and book basket.

**The Main Library's outdoor spaces were updated** to offer more engaging and educational experiences for families. Additions include musical instruments on the youth terrace and a giant Adirondack chair marking the Storybook Trail trailhead. *Funded by a generous bequest from the estate of James H. Neubacher.*

**Both branches improved accessibility to collections and spaces.**

Enhancements include wider shelf spacing at the Main Library, a forthcoming 24/7 holds pickup locker at the Westacres Branch, and the purchase of an outreach van for community events in 2026. *Van funded by a generous bequest from the Ruth and Stanley Elbling Trust and a donation from Gary Davis in memory of Sally Davis.*



*"There are lots of activities for kids to do in the library. The library opens doors for my family that otherwise would not be open."<sup>1</sup>*

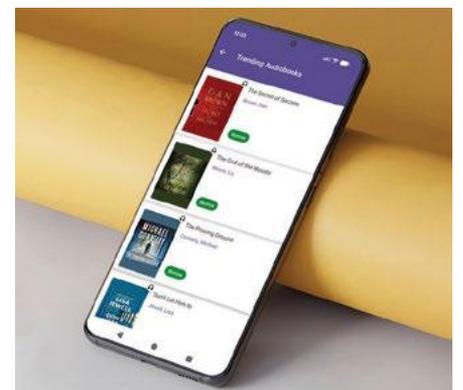
# Improvements to Digital Services

With interest in the eLibrary growing, the library increased funding for digital services as promised in its 2024 millage proposal.

**The eLibrary continues to grow in popularity.** In the 2024-25 fiscal year, eBooks saw a 8% increase in circulation. ESerial (magazines and newspapers) saw a 12% increase in circulation. EAudiobooks saw an astonishing 25% increase in circulation.

**Librarians have nearly doubled the number of adult eLibrary titles ordered in 2025.**

Over 1,720 unique youth and adult titles were added to the eLibrary, representing a 34% increase in eBooks across CloudLibrary and Libby and a 71% increase in eAudiobooks on CloudLibrary. The eLibrary will continue to grow in 2026 to meet demand, even as publishers raise costs for libraries. Libraries are now charged about \$40 per eBook license and \$68 per eAudiobook license.



*"Being able to access [eLibrary materials] is a life changer, especially in the ability to listen to audiobooks while I run, on a commute, or on a lazy Sunday."<sup>1</sup>*

**As the community's need for digital services grows, the library's services respond to meet demand.** Expanded tech tutoring availability has enabled a 14% increase in total sessions attended in 2025.

<sup>1</sup> Library Survey Response

## Improvements to IT Infrastructure

Updates to the IT infrastructure ensure the library remains cutting-edge and maintains 2024 millage proposal promises.

**The library has brought technology infrastructure in line with best practices.** This included migrating all computers to the secure Windows 11 OS, launching internal cybersecurity trainings, migrating library notices to a new platform, and replacing security cameras.

**New, easy-to-use self-checkout stations were installed** at both branches. The stations have optional accessibility, language, and receipt features.

**In response to popular request, the library launched a new app,** available on Apple or Android devices. The app allows library members to more easily search the catalog, place holds, and access library cards for the whole family.



*"Library staff always seems eager to help with any questions or help with using the new check-out machines."<sup>1</sup>*

## Continued Excellence

The greater West Bloomfield community expects excellence from its library—an expectation the library promised to continue meeting across services, programs, and collections in its 2024 millage proposal.

**Additional technology and study tools are now available for in-building use.** External disk drives, fidget tools, headphones (regular and noise-cancelling), whiteboards, study aides, anatomy models, charging cables, and more available upon request at the Information Desk at both branches. *Some items limited to residents and students.*

**The library expanded on successes from prior years in large-scale programming.** A second annual Shop Small event was held, with turnout nearly doubled since the first. The Local Author Fair saw a 17% increase in attendance and moved beyond the walls of the Meeting Room. The Halloween Storybook Stroll expanded following its popularity in 2024, allowing for a 77% increase in attendance in 2025. The Book Group Reception brought in author Lisa Unger, drawing a 57% increase in attendance. Finally, the library welcomed author Shelby Van Pelt in a first-ever partnership with the Bloomfield Township Public Library, hosted at the Berman Center and drawing over 500 attendees. *Author visits and Shop Small event sponsored by the Friends of the Library.*



*"Our library [has] so many amazing programs and services. The activities for kids and adults are varied and exciting. We constantly come to the library and recommend it to our friends all the time!"<sup>1</sup>*

**Library staff proactively contracted with more vendors for ordering collections,** expanding purchasing options for library books and media in case of supply chain disruptions. When the leading supplier of library content (West Bloomfield's primary supplier) announced its closure and subsequent widespread cancellations of preordered materials, the availability of these alternative vendors lessened the impact of delayed new materials for the West Bloomfield community.

**Administrators added an additional professional development day focused on staff and patron safety.** As a result, 72% of library staff have been certified and trained to administer first aid, use AEDs, and perform CPR.

GIFTS FROM THE

# Friends of the Library

The Friends of the West Bloomfield Township Public Library fundraises through memberships, Friendship purchases, and other campaigns to enhance library services and pay for special events. Funds are used annually to support library reading programs, children’s literacy projects, and more.

### VR at the Library

The Friends’ 2024 Giving Tuesday campaign raised funds for the library to expand its collection of Virtual Reality (VR) headsets. In 2025, these new headsets brought VR technology to 61 library visitors through the “Adventures in VR” event series.

### VR in School Outreach

Librarians also brought headsets into local schools for lunch and classroom programs. In 2026, teachers have requested the library bring VR into classrooms for virtual tours of sites like the Great Pyramids of Egypt and simulated dissection labs.

### Playscapes Campaign Exceeds Goal

In 2025, the Friends’ Giving Tuesday campaign raised \$22,305—a full \$7,000 over their fundraising goal! The campaign aimed to order new playscapes for the library. Installation is expected in 2026.

Cathy Russ, Executive Library Director  
 Jeff Crocker, Associate Library Director

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# A Community of Readers



## Popularity of Physical & Digital Resources

84% of materials circulated were physical; 16% were digital, marking a 3% increase in digital circulation since the previous fiscal year.



## Library Visits

The library logged **768,877** visits in the 2024-25 fiscal year—an increase of 4% from the prior fiscal year. That’s the equivalent of every person in the library’s service area visiting the library about 11 times over one year, or 9 visitors every 5 minutes the library was open.



## WiFi Usage

The number of visitors connecting to the library’s WiFi increased by 22% in the 2024-25 fiscal year.



## Reference Transactions

The library had **279,834** reference transactions in the 2024-25 fiscal year, representing an increase of 8% from the prior fiscal year. This means the library averaged one reference transaction every 1.5 minutes it was open.



## Member Satisfaction

When asked how likely they would be to recommend the library to friends or family, nearly **800** library members polled collectively rated the library a **94** Net Promoter Score. According to the library’s marketing software, the average rating among libraries is 87, while businesses average 70.



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[wplib.org](http://wplib.org)

### HOURS OF SERVICE

Monday – Thursday:	9 AM – 9 PM
Friday & Saturday:	9 AM – 6 PM
Sunday (Main):	Noon – 6 PM
Sunday (Main, Summer):	Noon – 5 PM
Sunday (Westacres):	Noon – 5 PM

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# HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE & SHREDDING

# 2026

**MAY 1** 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.  
**MAY 2** 9:00 a.m. - Noon  
**SEP 18** 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.  
**SEP 19** 9:00 a.m. - Noon

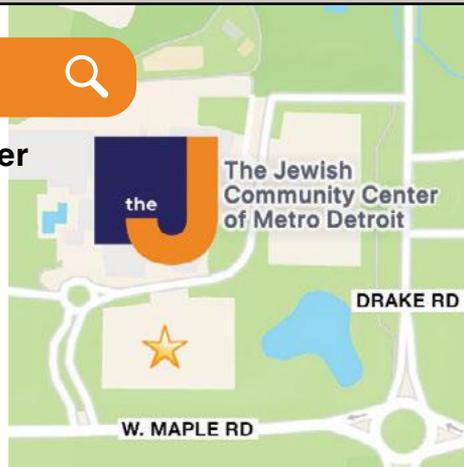


## NEW LOCATION



**Jewish Community Center  
of Metro Detroit**  
**6600 West Maple Road**

Enter from W. Maple Rd.  
ID Check at roundabout.  
Follow signs to recycling  
event.



Township Staff will pick up items from homebound West Bloomfield residents on May 1 and September 18.  
**Call Parks Community Transit** at (248) 706-2411 to schedule service.

## ON-SITE SHREDDING

Secure, on-site shredding of personal, household documents.  
**NO COMMERCIAL SHREDDING.**  
Limit 50lb/vehicle



## RECYCLE BOAT WRAPS

As thousands of WB Boat Owners unwrap their boats, huge quantities of waste film is produced. Plastic film cannot be recycled in your curbside bin or cart. Luckily, there's a new alternative!

**GET A BAG from Town Hall, and RECYCLE your boat wrap at:**

**April 1 - May 31** Town Hall East Parking Lot (daily)  
Bloomer Park Boat Launch (weekends)

West Bloomfield residents can recycle their hazardous waste **year-round** at ERG Environmental Services in Livonia. **Pick up a voucher** at Town Hall and present upon arrival. For more information, call (248) 451-4818.

## ACCEPTED ITEMS

### HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE

Aerosols Cans, Automotive Fluids (Gas, Oil, Antifreeze, Starter, Transmission, Brake, Lubricants), Batteries (Alkaline/ Auto/Household), Cleaners & Solvents (Household & Auto), Expired OTC Medications and Vitamins, Fire Extinguishers, Freon, Herbicides, Household Adhesives (Putty, Caulk), Lightbulbs (Incandescent, Fluorescent, LED, U-Shaped, Automotive, Floodlight), Liquid Mercury, Mercury Devices (Thermostats, Blood Pressure Cuffs, Thermometers, Switches, Barometers), Nail Polish (and Remover), Needles & Sharps (must be in puncture resistant container w/cap), Paint & Stains (Oil and Latex-based), Pesticides, Pool & Spa Chemicals, Propane Cylinders

### ELECTRONIC WASTE

Cable Boxes, Cell Phones, Computers (Keyboard, Laptop, Monitor, Mouse, Terminal), Cords/Cables, DVD/VCR, Fax Machines, Gaming Units, Notebooks, Pagers, Home Phones, Printers, Scanners, Stereos/Radios, Typewriters, Televisions.  
*No items in boxes.*

## UNACCEPTED ITEMS

Air Conditioning Units, Ammunition, Appliances, Compost/Yard Waste, Construction Material or Debris, Controlled Substances/Narcotics (accepted by West Bloomfield Police Department), Dehumidifiers, Car Parts, Plastic Shopping Bags, Radioactive Material, Trash/ Recycling, Tires, Tools or Shredding.

**No Commercial or Business Waste.**

# Cruz Clinic Now Offering Esketamine for Treatment-Resistant Depression

By Samuel Wedes, MD

**E**SKETAMINE, also known by its brand name, Spravato, is a relatively new antidepressant with a novel mechanism of action – it conveniently comes as a nasal spray.

It is FDA-approved for treatment-resistant depression and depression with suicidality, but it does not take the place of inpatient psychiatric hospitalization for people who are suicidal to the point of being a potential danger to themselves.

Treatment-resistant depression is quite common. Despite adequate trials of antidepressants and sometimes augmenting agents, people with treatment-resistant depression continue to struggle with symptoms of depression, including depressed mood, lack of interest or pleasure in activities that normally bring them joy, sleep and appetite disturbance, fatigue or lack of energy, difficulty concentrating or thinking clearly, a feeling of being abnormally slowed down or sped up, a sense of worthlessness or irrational guilt, and thoughts of death or suicide.

Esketamine has found a niche in the management of treatment-resistant depression, as well as depression with suicidality. Its effects tend to be rapid, sometimes within the first day of treatment. For others, it takes longer to see a response – up to four weeks or longer. It has been shown to be safe and efficacious.

Esketamine must be administered in a healthcare facility. All people receiving esketamine will have their blood pressure, pulse and oxygen saturation checked before treatment. These parameters will subsequently be checked periodically after treatment. All people are monitored by our treatment staff for at least two hours following the administration of the nasal spray in our comfortable esketamine suite.

Side effects from esketamine typically resolve within the two-hour monitoring window after receiving the nasal spray. Esketamine is known to cause sedation and dissociation, including feeling as if one is outside of themselves (depersonalization) or that one's surroundings are not real (derealization). Perceptual changes can occur. People may see shapes and colors that are not there. Increased blood pressure may occur. In rare cases, esketamine can cause respiratory depression, or decreased drive to breathe.

Esketamine also has the potential for misuse and abuse. Like all antidepressants, esketamine may increase the risk of suicidal thoughts and behaviors in young people. It is important to note that people receiving esketamine cannot drive or operate heavy machinery until the following day. They are welcome to have a friend or family member stay with them during treatment.

Esketamine is generally administered twice weekly for the first four weeks of treatment. This is considered the induction phase of treatment. After induction, people will enter the

maintenance phase, which generally requires once-weekly esketamine treatment for the first month, and then treatment weekly or every other week thereafter. While some people are able to stop esketamine treatment and maintain stability of their depression with oral agents and psychotherapy, others will require indefinite treatment with esketamine to maintain relief of their depressive symptoms.

If you or a loved one is suffering from treatment-resistant depression or depression with suicidality and is interested in esketamine treatment, please give the Cruz Clinic a call at (734) 462-3210 or visit us on the web at [www.cruzclinic.com](http://www.cruzclinic.com). You will speak with our intake department, who will set you up with an appointment with one of our esketamine prescribers to review your history, the risks and benefits of esketamine treatment, and what to expect during treatment. Once you meet with your prescriber, treatment can begin.

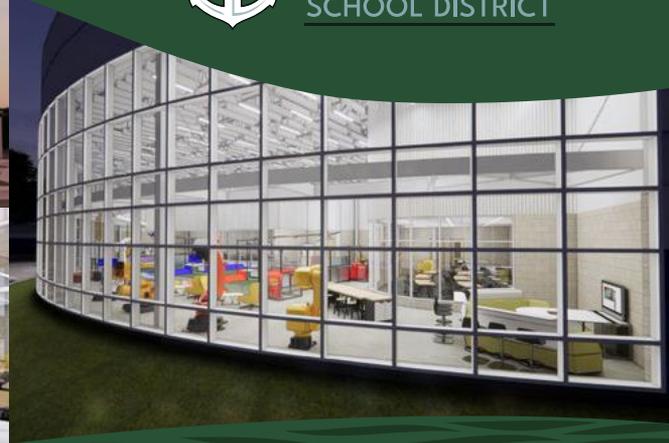
There is no need to suffer from treatment-resistant depression or depression with suicidality any longer.

*Dr. Wedes is a board-certified Psychiatrist who specializes in General Adult Psychiatry. Conditions he commonly sees include depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety, ADHD, and schizophrenia, among others. He strives to create a safe environment free from judgment. Dr. Wedes graduated from the Cleveland Clinic Lerner College of Medicine of Case Western Reserve University and completed residency at University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. He has over 10 years of experience.*



**CRUZ CLINIC**

17177 N. Laurel Park Drive,  
#131  
Livonia, MI 48152  
(734) 462-3210  
[www.cruzclinic.com](http://www.cruzclinic.com)



## A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

### District's investment in technology and infrastructure improves functionality, how students learn

Through the 2023 Bond Program, the district is investing in significant infrastructure upgrades and reimagined learning spaces that reflect how Laker students learn today and how they will learn in the future.

One of the most transformative projects now underway is the creation of new STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics) and Career Technical Education (CTE) learning environments, along with a dedicated receiving area addition to improve building operations. Together, these projects are designed to elevate hands-on, project-based learning while improving the overall functionality of the school.

The design was developed through a highly collaborative process involving TMP Architecture, AUCH Construction, district curriculum leaders, high school administration, teaching staff, and industry partners such as IST and FANUC Robotics. This intentional partnership ensured the spaces align with current programming while remaining flexible enough to support future instructional innovation for our Lakers.

The project includes a new addition at the southwest corner of the building that extends West Bloomfield High School's wave design along the front façade. Inside, the open-concept STEAM lab will serve as a hub for

creativity, collaboration and problem-solving, featuring a dedicated space for a full robotics program, including a full robotics competition practice field, alongside flexible studios for engineering, design and technology-based learning.

In parallel, the district is actively working on the furniture and equipment package that will bring these spaces to life. This effort is being led in collaboration with educators Kelli Mattson, Buddy Muylaert, James Shaw, and Principal Eric Pace, ensuring the environment is intentionally designed around instruction, student engagement and real-world application.

These investments reflect West Bloomfield's commitment to creating modern, inspiring spaces that prepare Lakers not just for graduation, but for the careers and challenges that await them beyond our walls. We are deeply grateful to our community for their continued support, as projects of this scale and impact would not be possible without it.

As always, we welcome questions, feedback and conversation, and encourage our community to reach out at any time.

Yours in Education,  
Dania H. Bazzi, PhD  
Superintendent

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

April 23-25: WBHS Spring Musical – Bye, Bye Birdie  
April 25: Laker Bot, FIRST Lego League at WBMS  
May 2: Robotics Atomic Glow at WBMS  
May 2: West Bloomfield Educational Foundation Fundraiser at Edgewood Country Club

May 12: WBHS Orchestra Spring Concert  
May 13: WBHS Choir Pops Concert  
May 16: Kiddie Kite Day  
May 25: No School, Memorial Day  
May 27: WBHS Graduation at Pine Knob  
June 5: Half Day – Students' Last Day  
June 8: Teachers Last Day – Records Day

# » LAKER News & Notes

## DAR GOOD CITIZENS

Congratulations to **Zoe Johnston**, senior at **Oakland Early College** and **Maya Klepaski**, senior at **West Bloomfield High School**, recipients of the DAR Good Citizen Award. The **DAR Good Citizen Award** recognizes and rewards individuals who possess good citizenship qualities of dependability, service, leadership, and patriotism in their homes, schools and communities.



## CHORAL FESTIVAL

West Bloomfield High School hosted more than 1,000 students from 20 different middle and high schools from southeast Michigan for the MSVMA District 4 Solo and Ensemble Choral Festival.

Every event that West Bloomfield High School entered received a first division rating (I), including the Laker Express Men's Ensemble, Chorale, and Laker Express Women's Ensemble under the direction of Jolene Plotzke.

## LIFELONG LEARNING AND STAFF MILESTONES



Farqad Alfatlawy, ELD instructional coach/WBHS ELD teacher, graduated from the University of Michigan Dearborn with a doctoral degree in educational leadership. Her dissertation is titled, "Instructional Coaching and Family Partnerships: Empowering Teachers and Parents to Support the Academic Growth of Arab and Middle Eastern Multilingual Learners."



Dr. Crystal Jabiro earned her Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) from Indiana Wesleyan University. Dr. Jabiro's specialization is in race, ethnicity and culture, and her dissertation, "The Ethnic Identity Development of Chaldean American Youth in the Ethnoburbs," explores cultural identity and preservation within the diaspora.



Cue the confetti! West Bloomfield School District proudly congratulates WBHS teacher, Jennifer Sepetys, on earning her PhD in Education: Educational Leadership from Oakland University.

Beginning in September 2020, Dr. Sepetys' doctoral research focused on student mental health, culminating in a four-year longitudinal mixed-methods case study titled, "The Impact of a Semester-Long Positive Psychology Course on High School Students' Mental Health and Well-Being."

## 2026 GREATER WEST BLOOMFIELD MICHIGAN WEEK COMMUNITY AWARDS BREAKFAST

Friday, May 8, 2026, at Temple Israel at 7 a.m.  
Tickets on sale: [www.michiganweek.org](http://www.michiganweek.org)  
Greater West Bloomfield volunteers give their time, talent and personal resources on a daily basis without regard for recognition or promotion. We invite you to help us celebrate and recognize these individuals and organizations that serve our community year-round.





## ROBOTICS

The WBMS Robogators team spent time giving back as part of its community service outreach. They made plarn (plastic yarn) for Disaster Relief at Work (DRAW). DRAW responds to floods, hurricanes and tornadoes around the United States by providing supplies and volunteer services to help disaster victims take their first steps back toward normalcy. Thank you to our coaches for encouraging community outreach.



Photo credit: Brenden Doyle, WBHS Junior



## TOOLS FOR SCHOOLS

West Bloomfield High School hosted a Schools to Tools mobile field trip to explore skilled trades and connect with industry professionals. Thank you to Mrs. Noelle Essig, college and career counselor, and the CTE team, for providing opportunities for all student pathways!

## DAY OF DESIGN

All four elementary schools participated in the Michigan Design Prize Challenge to create a furniture concept that provides a solution for specific uses for individuals with unique needs. Middle school students visited to lend a hand.



**WBMS Presents**  
**BYE BYE BIRDIE**

A Musical Comedy Book by  
**Michael Stewart**  
 Music by  
**Charles Strouse**  
 Lyrics by  
**Lee Adams**  
 Originally Produced by  
**Edward Padul**

**April**  
**24th & 25th @ 7pm**  
**26th @ 2-30pm**  
 West Bloomfield Highschool  
 4925 Orchard Lake Rd,  
 West Bloomfield Township, MI 48323

SCAN HERE FOR TICKETS

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## FREE ADMISSION FOR RESIDENTS 65+

Laker Senior Gold Cards are available for West Bloomfield School District residents aged 65 and over to attend plays, athletic games and musical performances free of charge. Cards are available at district schools and the ACS Office at 5810 Commerce Road.



## DECA DISTRICT 6 CONFERENCE

West Bloomfield High School earned 22 awards!

Twenty-nine students will compete in the state conference in March. Best of luck! DECA prepares emerging leaders and entrepreneurs in marketing, finance, hospitality and management in high schools and colleges around the globe.



# » LAKER Sports News



## BOWLING

West Bloomfield Boys Bowling Team High Average Award and Oakland Activities Association (OAA) white division champions, OAA tournament champs, and more!

A special recognition to Coach Watts for his outstanding leadership and dedication to our student-athletes. We are also proud to celebrate the accolades earned by the team!

Congratulations to Junior Brenden Doyle on the varsity bowling team for bowling a perfect 300 game against North Farmington. An outstanding accomplishment and the only perfect game in the OAA this season!



## UNIFIED BASKETBALL

Thank you to our coaches, Jed Jones and Jen Kozicki, for providing an inclusive basketball experience for all team members.

## WBHS VARSITY GIRLS BASKETBALL

Senior Sheridan Beal reached a major career milestone – scoring her 1,000th career point for Laker Nation – during a win against Clarkston High School, 62-52.



## WRESTLING

Congratulations to Wrestling Coach Greg Alessi for receiving a well-deserved Lifetime Achievement Award!



Since 1988, Coach Alessi has dedicated decades to building opportunities for student-athletes to learn, grow and gain confidence both on and off the mat. From hosting countless tournaments and district events to always doing what's best for the sport, his leadership and commitment are unmatched.

West Bloomfield School District is incredibly grateful for Coach Alessi's passion, dedication and the lasting standard of excellence he has set.



West Bloomfield School District is proud to announce that Athletic Director Eric Pierce has been named the Michigan Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (MIAAA) Region 11 Athletic Director of the Year, a well-deserved honor recognizing his exceptional leadership, dedication and lasting impact on student athletics.

Photo credit: Brenden Doyle, junior at WBHS

## CELEBRATING STUDENT ATHLETES

Congratulations to all the student-athletes who signed letters of intent to play college athletics:

- Amani Agott, Tennessee Tech University – volleyball
- Sheridan Beal, University of North Alabama – basketball
- Ezekiel Davis, University of Olivet – football
- Joel Davis, University of Olivet – football
- Willie Edwards, Lawrence Tech University – football
- Elizabeth Eichbrecht, Indiana University – swimming
- Kyren Merriewether, Hope College – football
- Kamari Pittman, Saginaw Valley State University – football
- Kaliq Robinson, Davenport University – football
- Jamal Shakespear, University of Findlay – football
- Connor Strong, Adrian College – baseball
- Kamryn Tatum, University of Illinois – track



# WBHS ALUM SPOTLIGHT ON Jade Cook Class of 2012

LOOKING BACK ON YOUR TIME AT WEST BLOOMFIELD HIGH SCHOOL, WHAT EXPERIENCES OR MEMORIES STAND OUT TO YOU THE MOST?

Overall, I had a very positive and rewarding experience at West Bloomfield High School, both academically and through involvement with extracurricular activities.

One of my favorite experiences was being a member of the Poms team for all four years of high school. I built lasting friendships with my teammates, and looked forward to after-school practices and performing at football and basketball games. I remember also going to baseball games and hockey to support friends, and have great memories cheering classmates on.

The senior year traditions, such as the Powderpuff football game, were especially fun as it brought our class together and added excitement to our final year. Even just meeting up with friends in the atrium mornings before class was a fun way to connect with those whom I didn't share classes with.

Academically, the Medical Mentorship class was especially impactful, as it gave me the opportunity to shadow my former orthodontist and helped solidify my goal of pursuing a career in orthodontics.

I also got to spend my first two years of high school with my older brother and we even had a weightlifting class

together. It was a lot of fun to get to spend time with him during high school, even just running into each other in the hallways or at lunch.

WAS THERE A TEACHER, CLASS, AND/OR SUBJECT THAT HAD A LASTING IMPACT ON YOU, AND WHY?

Several of my former teachers had a lasting impact on me, but Mrs. Mulcahy, Mrs. Ismail and Mr. Abel were among my favorite teachers. Their passion for education was apparent and they had the ability to make even the most challenging lessons enjoyable.

All three of these teachers encouraged students to put in the hard work and often went the extra mile to help guide us to success. I remember attending an extra study session that Mr. Abel put on with our AP Calc class to ensure we were ready for our exam. While we were all stressed, he still managed to make the session lighthearted and, of course, extremely helpful.

I have had many teachers and professors throughout my different levels of education, and it is rare to find someone who is able to present the information in a digestible and coherent way, while connecting with students using empathy and kindness.

WHAT LESSONS OR SKILLS DID WEST BLOOMFIELD HIGH SCHOOL HELP YOU DEVELOP THAT YOU STILL USE TODAY?

I was able to develop and set the foundation for good study habits through my AP classes. This helped as I transitioned into my undergraduate studies and into a more rigorous schedule. Taking AP classes also taught me the importance of time management, as I learned to balance academics, extracurricular activities and time with friends and family.

These were all important skills throughout the 11 years of schooling I went through after high school, and they continue to play an important role in my life today.

Additionally, being on the Poms team taught me about working with others for a common goal, and being the

captain of the JV Poms team provided me with a leadership opportunity. These are very important skills to have as an orthodontist because I must act as a leader in the clinic daily. However, I am also a part of a team and cannot be successful without the support of all of the staff that I work with.

### HOW HAS YOUR APPRECIATION FOR WEST BLOOMFIELD HIGH SCHOOL CHANGED OR GROWN SINCE GRADUATING?

I look back fondly on my time at West Bloomfield High School since graduating and often talk about those days when I get together with my friends I made in high school. While it could sometimes be difficult to appreciate in the moment, WBHS provided a balance of a good education with quality educators, ample opportunities for extracurricular activities and a great deal of school spirit.

I truly appreciate my years at WBHS and continue to be proud to be a Laker. After high school, I went to the University of Michigan for the rest of my schooling and my Laker spirit shined as I cheered on the Lakers who became a part of the Michigan football team, like Donovan Edwards, Semaj Morgan and even Coach Bellamy.

### IN WHAT WAYS DID BEING A LAKER HELP SHAPE WHO YOU ARE PERSONALLY OR PROFESSIONALLY?

In the past few years, I have met several people who went to WBHS, and even if we weren't in the same graduating class our shared history of being students at WBHS has provided a sense of community and formed a connection between us.

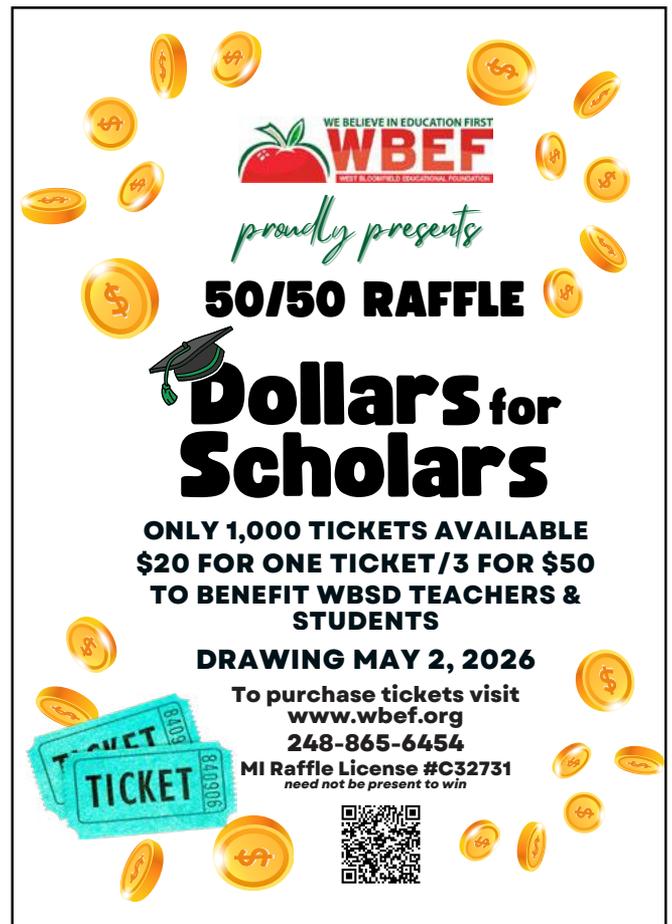
My husband is also a Laker, and although he graduated a few years before me we enjoy talking about WBHS history – like the fashion show – and teachers we had in common.

Additionally, after my orthodontic training I moved back to the area and started my career at HBI Orthodontics. It has been wonderful to connect with patients and their parents who are Lakers, and those who will be future Lakers. It feels great to give back and work in the community that I grew up in.

### WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO CURRENT WEST BLOOMFIELD HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS AS THEY PREPARE FOR LIFE AFTER GRADUATION, AND FRESHMEN AS THEY BEGIN HIGH SCHOOL?

My advice for seniors is to take advantage of all the school activities and celebrations surrounding your final year. Life truly moves so quickly, even more so as you get older, so enjoy these exciting times before you're out in the real world.

My advice for freshmen would be to get involved in both clubs and activities and do not be afraid to try something new. Having a multifaceted high school experience will undoubtedly positively impact how you approach the world and interact with others after high school, and if you plan on continuing your education, a well-rounded high school experience is crucial during the college admissions process. WBHS certainly provides a wonderful foundation to build those experiences.



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Deborah Evans, Trustee

**WBSD** Board Meetings are held in the iCenter at West Bloomfield High School at 7 p.m. Board Study Sessions are held at 6:30 p.m., in the ACS building, 5810 Commerce Road.

April 6 - Board Study Session  
April 20 - Board Meeting  
May 4 - Board Study Session  
May 18 - Board Meeting  
June 8 - Board Study Session  
June 15 - Board Workshop  
June 22 - Board Meeting

### West Bloomfield School District

Dania H. Bazzi, PhD  
Superintendent  
248-865-6485

### Call for a Tour

West Bloomfield High School  
248-865-6720

Oakland Early College  
248-522-3540

Laker Opportunity Center  
248-522-3542

West Bloomfield Transition Center  
248-539-0532

West Bloomfield Middle School  
248-865-4480

Doherty Elementary School  
248-865-6020

Gretchko Elementary School  
248-865-6570

Scotch Elementary School  
248-865-3280

Sheiko Elementary School  
(at Abbott site temporarily)  
248-865-6370

Adult Ed. English Language Learner  
248-539-2390

WB Preschool Academy  
248-865-6457

### WBSD Communications

Andrea Frank  
248-865-6454

# Creating Healthy Smiles Early

## Understanding Palatal Expansion

**M**ANY parents are surprised to learn that orthodontic treatment doesn't always begin with braces. In fact, for some children, the most important step happens much earlier – and focuses not on straightening teeth but on guiding proper jaw development. One of the most effective tools we use to accomplish this is palatal expansion.



At Nakisher Orthodontics, we often recommend palatal expansion for growing patients whose upper jaw is too narrow to properly fit their teeth or align with the lower jaw. Because children are still developing, we have a unique opportunity to correct skeletal issues at the right time – often preventing more complicated treatment later.

### What Is Palatal Expansion?

Palatal expansion is an orthodontic procedure that gently widens the upper jaw (the maxilla) using a custom-made appliance called an expander. The device fits comfortably over the upper teeth and applies light, controlled pressure to gradually open the natural growth seam in the palate.

This process is possible because, in children and preteens, the two halves of the upper jaw have not yet fused. By guiding this growth, we can create the space needed for proper alignment and function – working *with* nature rather than against it.

### How Do You Know If a Child Is a Candidate?

Not every child needs expansion, but certain signs tell us when it may be beneficial:

- Crowded teeth or lack of space for incoming permanent teeth
- Crossbite (when upper teeth fit inside the lower teeth)
- A narrow or “V-shaped” upper arch
- Mouth breathing or airway concerns
- Early loss of baby teeth due to crowding
- Family history of orthodontic issues related to jaw size

The American Association of Orthodontists recommends that children receive their first orthodontic evaluation by age 7. At this stage, we can identify whether expansion would help guide healthy development.

### Why Expansion Matters Beyond Straight Teeth

While many people associate orthodontics with aesthetics, palatal expansion offers several functional and health-related benefits:

- **Creates Space Naturally** – Expansion often eliminates the need for permanent tooth extractions later by allowing teeth to erupt into proper positions.
- **Improves Bite Alignment** – Correcting jaw width helps the upper and lower teeth fit together properly,

reducing uneven wear and strain on the jaw joints.

- **Supports Better Breathing** – Widening the upper jaw can also widen the nasal passages, which may improve airflow and encourage nasal breathing – an important factor in overall health and sleep quality.
- **Enhances Facial Balance** – Proper jaw development contributes to balanced facial growth, particularly in the midface region.
- **Simplifies Future Orthodontic Treatment** – When addressed early, expansion can make later phases of treatment shorter, less invasive and more stable.

### What Is Treatment Like?

Parents are often relieved to learn that expansion is far less dramatic than it sounds. The appliance is fixed in place (so children don't have to remember to wear it), and



adjustments are quick and gentle. Most patients adapt within a few days and continue eating, speaking and participating in activities normally.

Expansion typically takes just a few months, followed by a stabilization period that allows new bone to form and hold the improved shape.

### Timing Is Everything

Palatal expansion is most effective during growth, which is why early evaluation is so important. Once the jaw has fully matured, correcting a narrow palate may require more complex treatment options.

By identifying the right patients at the right time, we can guide healthy development, improve function and set the stage for a lifetime of confident smiles.

### Take the First Step

An early orthodontic evaluation can make a lasting difference in your child's health, development and confidence. If you have questions about your child's growth or wonder whether palatal expansion may be beneficial, we are here to help guide you every step of the way.

We invite families to schedule a **complimentary initial consultation** to learn more about your child's unique needs and the timing that is right for them.

We welcome you to visit one of our convenient locations in Farmington Hills and Commerce. **Farmington Hills Office:** (248) 855-4142. **Commerce Office:** (248) 363-2011.

**A healthy smile starts with the right foundation – and early guidance can make all the difference.**

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## ATTENTION WEST BLOOMFIELD VOTERS!

### Here's what you need to know in 2026

By Debbie Binder, West Bloomfield Township Clerk

**A**S we prepare for a busy election year, it is a good time to remind you of the options available to cast your ballots for our 2026 gubernatorial elections taking place on August 4, 2026 (state primary) and November 3 (state general). We have been receiving phone calls regarding news stories and changing legislation. However, we hold off on discussion of potential changes in procedure until confirmed by the State of Michigan Bureau of Elections.

At the present time, voters have three options for voting. In addition to voting in your polling location on Election Day, Early Voting and Absentee Voting remain options to cast your ballot.

Absentee Ballots become available 40 days prior to Election Day. All voters on the Permanent Ballot List will be sent an absentee ballot for each election they are eligible to vote in. If you are on the Permanent Absent Voter Application List instead, you will be sent an application to request an absentee ballot. You may request to be added to the Permanent Ballot List at any time, but your request must be in writing with a matching signature.

**Please note: You may bring your Absentee Ballot to your Early Voting Center during early voting, or to your polling location on Election Day, when you will be able to tabulate your ballot yourself.**

You may also cast your vote in the county's Early Voting Center at the West Bloomfield Township Public Library – Main Campus at 4600 Walnut Lake Road, right next to Town Hall. The Early Voting Center will be available for early voting beginning the second Saturday prior to

Election Day through the Sunday prior to Election Day for nine (9) consecutive days.

The Early Voting Center will be open every day outlined above from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., with the exception of Thursdays when the center will be open from 12:00 p.m. through 8:00 p.m.

All Absentee Ballots must be received at the Clerk's Office by 8:00 p.m. on Election Day, except for military and overseas ballots as outlined by statute.

Just a reminder: we have consolidated precincts from 26 to 20, as is now allowed by law. You may have a new polling location for the 2026 elections and most likely will have a new precinct number. If you have any questions about your new polling location or precinct number, you can either call the Clerk's Office at (248) 451-4848 or email us at [AVvoters@wbtownship.org](mailto:AVvoters@wbtownship.org).

We look forward to serving you in 2026 for the state primary and state general elections! In the meantime, don't forget the Clerk's Office is a Passport Acceptance Agency. Appointments can be scheduled online or by calling the Clerk's Office. Contact the Clerk's Office for additional information about items needed to request a passport.



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## TREASURER'S TALK

# Michigan Infrastructure Council's Asset Management Champions

## Building Stewardship for a Stronger Future

By Teri Weingarden, West Bloomfield Township Treasurer

**I**NFRASTRUCTURE is the backbone of our township, enabling daily life and powering our economy. From the roads we drive to the water we drink, reliable infrastructure is essential for a strong and prosperous future.

As we look ahead, it becomes clear that stewarding these assets wisely is not only a matter of necessity but also an opportunity to shape a better tomorrow for all West Bloomfield residents.

Recognizing the importance of stewardship, the Michigan Infrastructure Council (MIC) launched the Asset Management Champions (AMC) program. The AMC program is designed to foster a statewide culture of effective infrastructure management. By offering complimentary, voluntary training, MIC empowers public sector employees and contractors with the principles and practical strategies needed to manage municipal assets responsibly.

Recently I had the privilege of completing the AMC program, and I have seen firsthand how this program elevates our sense of responsibility. I am now one of 700 asset management graduates across Michigan. This community of practice has enabled West Bloomfield to participate in robust networking and ongoing shared learning, helping all of us stay up to date with evolving best practices and innovative approaches.

Michigan's Asset Management Champions program reminds us that effective infrastructure management is a community effort, and community stewardship is not just a job – it's a shared commitment.

We are all part owners of our community's infrastructure. Our roads, pipes and power lines belong to all of us. Taking care of them means investing in them for our long-term well-being, now and for future generations.



# HOMework

## It Doesn't Have To Be So Hard

By Tracy Willis

**"B**UT I don't get it! You didn't explain it the way my math teacher did."

Fat tears rolled down my cheeks and plopped onto the worksheet of 20 impossible math problems.

"Oh, go ask your father for help then."

This scenario happened at least once a week in my household. My mother was a teacher but she lacked the patience for my math drama, and I wanted nothing to do with her help. Math homework was a particularly harrowing experience.

If you're a parent, chances are you've run the homework gauntlet with your child. Sometimes you win, and other times you wear the battle scars to bed.

Homework doesn't have to be so hard. The purpose of homework isn't to torture. It's meant to provide a point of practice for skills your child has learned in class. And while there are many experts with big opinions about the pros and cons of homework, the fact remains that your child will have homework in their school career. There are strategies to support your child and keep your sanity.

### It's time to organize.

One factor that keeps students from being successful with homework is that the home environment lacks structures to support success. Children crave routines that support them as they move through their day. That need doesn't stop when they come home from school.

- **Set a homework time with your student.** Does she need to decompress after school, or would she rather jump into homework right away? Set a homework time together.
- **Create a homework spot.** Younger students may need to have you nearby to stay focused. Try the kitchen table during dinner prep. Keep a basket nearby of necessary materials like pencils, scissors, etc. Older students may handle more privacy. Set up a desk in their bedroom. Wherever you choose, make sure that it's free from distractions. Cell phones off!



- **Create a battle plan.** Look over your child's assignment planner or homework tasks. Help them organize their backpack with folders if things are getting lost or destroyed. Discuss how they want to tackle the tasks.

### You're the guide-on-the-side.

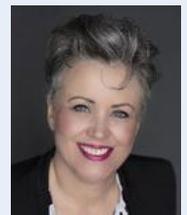
Think of yourself as a guide-on-the-side. Homework usually isn't graded, but it's important for mastering skills and preparing for future learning.

- **Stay close.** Stay close by to monitor and give assistance to younger students. With middle school and high school students, check on them to see if they need support. Offer it. They may not accept it but communicate that you're there if they need help.
- **Value productive struggle.** Don't rush in to rescue at the first sign of distress. It's one of the hardest impulses to ignore. Teachers call this productive struggle. Talk through the issue with your child, ask questions, offer suggestions, but if you rescue, you're doing the learning, not your child.

### Flip the mindset.

Having a growth mindset helps everyone's stress levels. Helping your child change her mindset of "I don't know how to do this" to "I can't remember how to do this, but I can find out" diminishes the stress. Today's students have so many digital tools that parents never had growing up. There are countless YouTube videos that show content and step-by-step processes, as well as homework-support sites on the internet. Teach your child to ask questions when she returns to school the next day. Children can talk to teachers about what they didn't understand or remember when working on homework. This is an important part of the learning process.

*Tracy has been teaching for over 30 years in and out of Michigan. She currently teaches middle school and spends her free time writing for publications and small businesses. When she's not putting pencil to paper or dreaming up ways to inspire her English students, she can be found in the woods on the trails.*





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# Not Every Call For Service is a Law Enforcement Matter

## Mental health clinician welcomed to better serve community

By Chief Dale Young

**W**E know that some calls for help need more than just a law enforcement approach, especially when someone is going through a difficult mental health situation. That's why we're excited to introduce a new public safety program focused on better supporting residents facing mental health challenges. This initiative is shared across the communities of West Bloomfield, Orchard Lake, Sylvan Lake, and the villages of Franklin and Bingham Farms.

This month, we officially launched our regional Co-Responder Program, embedding a licensed mental health professional directly within our police departments. We are pleased to welcome Kim Craighead as our new co-responder.

The co-responder model pairs a trained clinician with police officers to respond to calls involving mental health crises, substance use issues and other behavioral health concerns. While officers will always address immediate safety needs, the addition of a mental health professional allows us to bring specialized expertise directly to the scene.

Kim will assist with on-scene crisis intervention, de-escalation, risk assessments, and referrals to appropriate services. She will also

provide short-term follow-up and help connect individuals and families with local treatment providers and community-based resources. In many cases, this approach can reduce unnecessary emergency room visits or jail



admissions, ensuring residents receive the right care at the right time.

This program supports our broader mission of safeguarding the community through constitutional policing and community engagement. It recognizes that not every call for service is solely a law enforcement matter.

If you or a loved one is experiencing a mental health crisis, please continue to call 911 in an emergency. Our officers and our co-responder are here to help.

We are confident this program will enhance public safety, strengthen community trust and ensure compassionate, professional care for those who need it most.



Top: Mental health co-responder Kim Craighead (left) with WBPD Dispatch Manager Jennifer Curran and (bottom) with WBPD Officer Phil Todd.





# Storm Safety Tips

FROM THE WEST BLOOMFIELD FIRE DEPARTMENT

**S**EVERE storms can cause power outages, downed trees, flooding, and other hazardous conditions. The West Bloomfield Fire Department reminds residents that preparation and awareness can significantly reduce the risk of injury, fire and property damage during and after a storm.

## Generator Safety

Portable generators can be lifesaving during power outages, but they also pose serious risks if used incorrectly.

- Never operate generators indoors, including garages, basements, crawlspaces, or near open windows or doors.
- Carbon monoxide (CO) is colorless and odorless and can build up quickly, even if doors or windows are open.
- Place generators at least 20 feet from your home, with exhaust directed away from buildings.
- Use only heavy-duty, outdoor-rated extension cords.
- Never connect a generator directly to your home's wiring unless it is installed with a proper transfer switch by a licensed electrician.

## Carbon Monoxide and Smoke Alarms

- Ensure carbon monoxide and smoke alarms are installed and working properly before storm season.
- Test alarms monthly and replace batteries at least once a year.
- If a CO alarm sounds, leave the building immediately and call 911.
- If you smell gas or hear a hissing sound, leave immediately and call 911 from a safe location.



## Downed Power Lines

- Treat all downed or sagging power lines as energized and dangerous.
- Stay away from metal objects, such as fences, as they can be energized as well.
- Stay at least 30 feet away and keep others clear.
- Call 911 or your utility company to report the hazard.
- Use flashlights instead of candles to reduce fire risk.



## Flooding and Water Hazards

- Avoid driving through flooded roadways, as you don't know how deep the flood is, potentially causing your car to get stuck.
- Keep children away from storm drains, creeks and flooded areas (particularly any rushing water).
- If water is entering your home and electrical outlets may be affected, do not enter standing water.

# Tired of struggling with poor vision? Not sure what to do? Ask the Doctor

**Q:** Dr. Jacobi, my usual eye doctor said she could no longer improve my vision with regular eyeglasses or surgery, but I still struggle with everything from driving to reading. I have been told I have "low vision. What does that mean, and what could I hope for from a low vision evaluation?

- Mabel M.

**A:** The first step is to determine how much actual vision or usable vision you have. In addition, we need to identify your needs. I find most patients who are struggling with poor vision due to various eye diseases still have very usable vision when they are given the right eyewear.

One of the first things I ask my patients is what they would like to accomplish with improved sight. I ask about activities they have given up due to their visual limitations. The only limitation for the solution is usually the motivation of the patient, as they come to terms with a permanent, lowered visual status. However, this is often the best time to see a low vision specialist such as myself, because the sooner you get the right eyewear, life will be easier.

During the first appointment, I spend one hour with each patient in order to pinpoint the best optical solutions (beyond regular eyeglasses). Next I will show you what it would look like with the vision restored by the new eyewear, so you can determine if that will work for you. In other words, the patient will experience exactly how they will see with their prescribed devices before they leave the office.

**Stop struggling with poor vision.  
To schedule an appointment**

**CALL TODAY (248) 731-9393**

## ABOUT BEYOND LOW VISION

For more than 35 years, John P. Jacobi, OD, FCOVD, FIALVS has been helping partially sighted people get their lives back. Dr. Jacobi is a Fellow of the Optometric Vision Development and Rehabilitation Association. He is a member of American Optometric Association (AOA), the Michigan Optometric Association (MOA), and a Fellow in the International Academy of Low Vision Specialists.



[www.beyondlowvision.com](http://www.beyondlowvision.com)

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## TO YOUR HEALTH!

# Roots of Deliciousness

## Add (inexpensive) depth to your meals with hearty greens

By Lisa Howard

**C**REAMED spinach. Stewed collard greens. Kale chips. The base ingredient for all those beloved dishes is a hearty green.

As a group, hearty greens are inexpensive and outlast a lot of their produce neighbors in the fridge. Some even come as a two-for-one bonus, like kohlrabi greens, beet greens and turnip greens – they're often attached to the star of the show (i.e., the root) and are overlooked.

But there's no need to waste any of that culinary talent! Instead of ditching attached greens, when you get them home, cut them free from their roots and store them separately in the crisper drawer. Along with giving you a freebie ingredient, liberating the roots from the greens means the roots will stay juicier and fresher. (Otherwise, the roots will lend their energy to the greens and the greens will try to keep growing, leaving the roots drier and more fibrous.)

Thinner, more delicate greens like beet greens and chard won't last as long as their super-hearty cousins like kale and collards, but all greens can be rinsed, dried well and then chopped and frozen for later use. Do not rinse them before refrigerating them, though, as that will speed up their decline.

If you want to slowly braise your greens with deeply savory co-ingredients like bacon and onions or if you want to blanch them and use them as a wrap, go with thicker, more sturdy greens. (Collards make great wrappers!) Kale is ideal for making chips (see recipe below), especially the über-crenellated curly kale with its

myriad nooks and crannies for holding seasonings.

Mustard and turnip greens stand out with their distinct flavors, while kohlrabi greens are milder but still quite sturdy.

Lighter-weight greens like spinach, beet greens, chard and dandelion greens cook faster and are more subtle companion ingredients to include in soups and stews. No matter which green you choose, though, smooth, rich ingredients like extra-virgin olive oil, cheese, butter and eggs are always welcome additions, as are counterbalancing acidic ingredients like lemon juice and tomatoes.

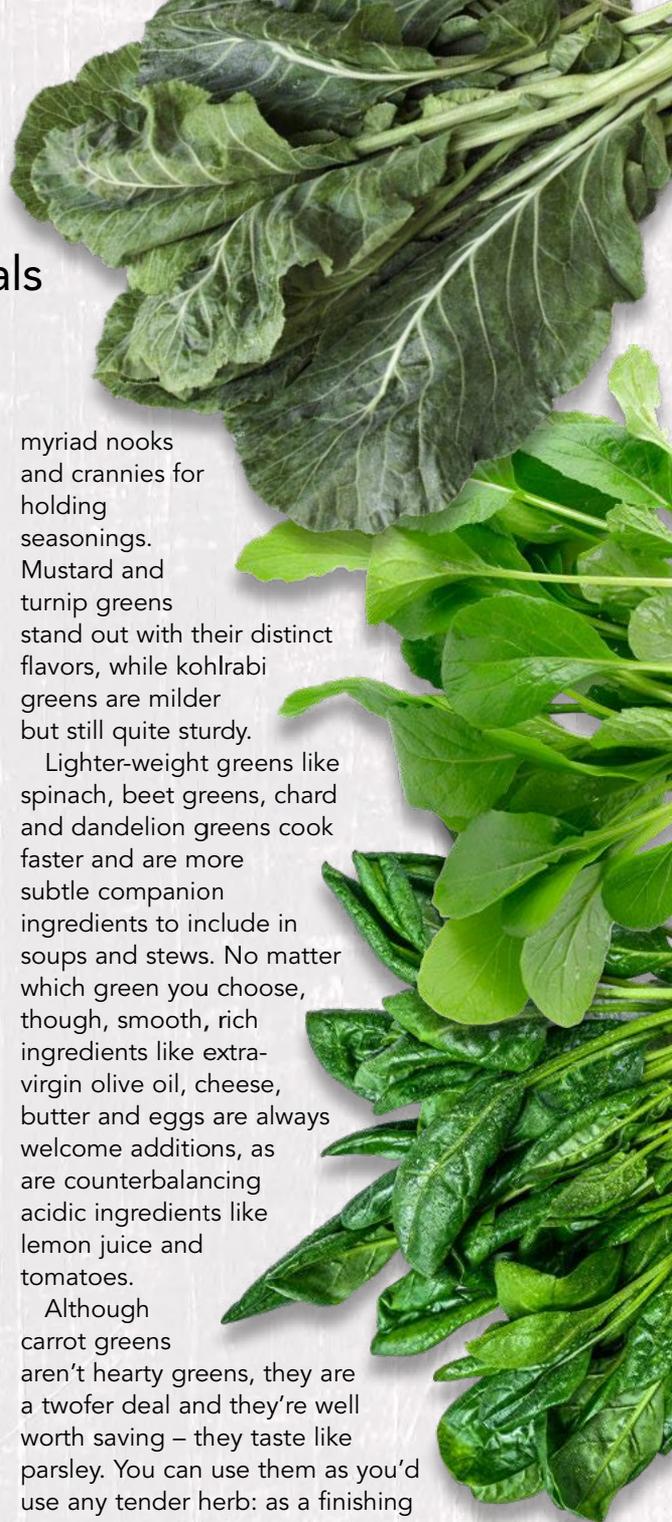
Although carrot greens aren't hearty greens, they are a twofer deal and they're well worth saving – they taste like parsley. You can use them as you'd use any tender herb: as a finishing garnish, as a flavoring herb, as the cornerstone of pesto. If nothing else, pop them into a narrow vase and let their airy fronds spill over and decorate your table.

*Lisa Howard is a writer, editor and health educator who loves to share her joy of cooking delicious and nutritious foods during her community talks and culinary classes. You can find out more about her classes and recipes at [www.theculturedcook.com](http://www.theculturedcook.com).*



### KALE CHIPS

- Preheat the oven to 325F and cover 2 baking sheets with parchment paper.
- Rip the tough ribs away from each curly kale leaf and discard them. Tear the leaves into small pieces and place them in a large bowl. Using a coffee/spice grinder, grind ¼ cup sunflower seeds with ¼ cup sesame seeds, 1 tablespoon dried Italian herbs and 1 tablespoon nutritional yeast.
- Drizzle the kale lightly with up to 1 tablespoon of tamari, shake on the seasoning and scrunch the leaves with your hands to get the seasoning to stick. (The goal is to use just enough tamari to make the leaves a little bit wet.)
- Spread the chips out on baking sheets so that none overlap and bake for 20 minutes or until the chips are crispy and starting to turn brown.
- Enjoy immediately!



# 2026 Spring Market Guide

By Kelsi Klein

With spring in the air comes a variety of markets popping up across southeast Michigan. From local art and crafts to vintage items, baked goods and so much more, there is something for everyone at these community markets this spring.



## March 28 Hello Spring Marketplace

4:30-9:30 p.m.  
Royal Oak Farmers Market  
316 E. 11 Mile Road,  
Royal Oak, MI 48067

Welcome in spring by shopping from a variety of more than 80 vendors with food trucks, cash bar, live music and fun for all. For more information, visit the Hello Spring Night Market Facebook page.



## April 18 Bloom and Browse Market

11 a.m.-2 p.m.  
Willow Greenhouse  
7839 Curtis Road, Northville, 48168

Celebrate spring with more than 20 local small businesses, artisan crafters and makers showcasing handcrafted and homegrown goods, including bath and body products, small batch candles, local art, Michigan-made food items, handmade jewelry and accessories and more. For more information about this free event, visit the Willow Greenhouse Facebook page.



## April 25 Spring Fling Vendor Market

11 a.m.-3 p.m.  
Kinergy Center  
2250 Oak Street,  
Wyandotte, MI 48192

Shop local from a variety of artisan and craft vendors at this annual event, where everyone is welcome. For more information, visit the Spring Fling Vendor Market Facebook page.



## April 18 Woodhaven Band Spring Craft and Vendor Show

10 a.m.-4 p.m.  
Brownstown Event Center  
23345 King Road,  
Brownstown, MI 48183

This annual community event will offer a wide variety of items and vendors with proceeds supporting Woodhaven Band programs. There is a \$2 entrance fee for ages 13+. For more information, email [whsbandcraftshow@gmail.com](mailto:whsbandcraftshow@gmail.com).



## April 18 Spring Artisan Market

9 a.m.-3 p.m.  
The Gathering Near Kellogg Park  
Downtown Plymouth, MI 48170

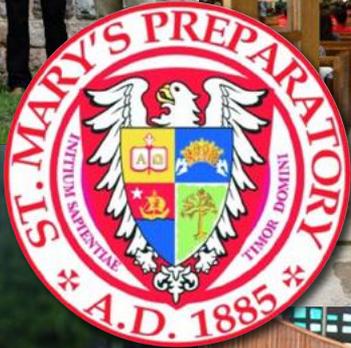
This annual event showcases a wide variety of high-quality artisanal products ranging from handcrafted jewelry and pottery to homemade soaps and candles. There will be family-friendly entertainment and delicious treats. For more information, visit [www.downtownplymouth.org](http://www.downtownplymouth.org).



## May 2 Art in Bloom: Spring Artisan Market

10 a.m.-5 p.m.  
Village Arts Factory  
50755 Cherry Hill Road,  
Canton, MI 48188

Experience over 20 local vendors selling art, crafts, food items and artisanal wares at this free event open to the public. There will be food trucks, coffee, concessions, live music, face painting and more. For more information, visit [www.cantonmi.gov](http://www.cantonmi.gov).



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# Greater West Bloomfield Chamber of Commerce 2026 Will Be a Year of Impact!

Suzanne Levine, Executive Director

**W**E kicked off 2026 with a bold, new strategic vision focused on strengthening and supporting our entire community!

Our Annual Installation of the Board of Directors at the Connect Senior Center was a tremendous success and truly set the tone for the year ahead. We were honored that Judge Diane D’Agostini of the 48th District Court once again donned her judicial robes to install our dynamic and dedicated board. Thanks go to our community partner, West Bloomfield Parks, for their collaboration.

This is a year of impact – turning words into action and intentionally identifying and responding to the needs of our community. Our highly anticipated Leadership Luncheon returns on April 29, with the powerful duo of KC Crain, president and CEO of Crain Communications Inc.; and Roop Raj, FOX 2 evening anchor and host of the Pulse, emceeding. Their insights into the impact of regional, national and international events on businesses promise to be timely, relevant and inspiring.

This fabulous event will be held at WabEEK Country Club. There is an admission fee to attend, and it is sure to be well worth the investment.

Our Health and Wellness Fair will take place on Tuesday, June 16 at the West Bloomfield Township offices. This important community event will offer valuable medical and wellness resources to the public at no charge, while vendors may participate for a fee. It continues to be one of our most impactful outreach initiatives.

Other exciting 2026 events include:

- Key to the Township Awards Breakfast
- Golf Challenge at Pine Lake Country Club on September 29
- Women’s Holiday Pop-Up in November
- Our reimagined Not-So-White Elephant Charity Party on an even larger and more exciting scale

Special thanks to Henry Ford West Bloomfield for its generous sponsorship of these events.

Our new board, led by co-presidents Jennifer Taylor-Boykins and Shawn St. Andre, is energized and ready to usher in a year filled with innovation, collaboration and measurable results. We are committed to demonstrating just how serious we are about the success and growth of our business community.

This year will serve as the blueprint for the years to come – a year defined by leadership, action and lasting impact.





# What's the Buzz?

## How to support Michigan's pollinators this spring By Kelsi Klein

**A**s we finally break free from winter and begin to welcome the sights and sounds of spring, there is a whole group of native pollinators awakening and emerging, ready to play a crucial, yet often unnoticed role in Michigan's ecosystem.

### What are pollinators and why are they important?

According to the National Park Service, pollinators are anything that helps move pollen from one part of a flower to another. This process is vital to the fertilization of plants, helping make seeds, fruits and even new plants.

Michigan is home to a wide variety of native pollinators including bees, butterflies, moths, flies, beetles and even hummingbirds and bats.

While some plants are pollinated by themselves, water or wind, approximately 75-95 percent of all flowering plants on Earth rely on animal pollinators.

The United States Department of Agriculture has reported that about 35 percent of the world's food crops, including Michigan staples like apples, blueberries, cherries, cucumbers, squash and countless others, are pollinated by animals.

In addition to food crops, pollinators are essential for reproducing plants that provide food and shelter for Michigan's wildlife as well as purifying the air and stabilizing soil.

### How are they in danger?

With more than 450 species of bees alone, Michigan's diverse pollinators work around the clock to keep the ecosystem running smoothly, but they are also facing real challenges.



Pollinators need natural spaces with flowering plants, grasses and shrubs for food and shelter. Agriculture, development and other human activities are causing habitat loss, pushing pollinators out of their homes.

When non-native plant species take over, native plants that pollinators rely on can die out. Even if non-native plants are attractive, they don't always offer the right nutrition or habitat for pollinators.

Even if they don't kill pollinators directly, pesticides can impact the plants that they rely on, leaving behind chemicals that can affect their health.

### How can residents help?

The easiest way to help pollinators is to spread the word. If people don't know how important they are, they won't know how important it is to protect them.

Planting native plants is one of the biggest ways to support pollinators. Early blooming plants like wild columbine and woodland phlox provide food in early spring, while black-eyed Susans and purple coneflower last through fall. Milkweed is another crucial native plant as it's the only plant on which Monarch butterflies lay their eggs.



Reducing or eliminating pesticides is another key step in helping pollinators. Hand-pulling weeds rather than spraying them with weed killer and tolerating minor plant damage can go a long way.

Homeowners can also rethink spring cleaning. Leaving old leaves, hollow plant stems and bark undisturbed until the weather stays consistently warm keeps pollinators' shelters intact and habitats preserved when they need it most.

Communities around Michigan are encouraging pollinator-friendly practices with education and conservation. Many city parks are allowing space for un-mowed grass and wildflowers to support pollinators, and homeowners can do the same in their own back yards.



**April 24**

**Touch-a-Truck**

4-7 p.m.

Drake Sports Park

6801 Drake Road

Children are invited to get an up-close look at all kinds of vehicles from West Bloomfield police cruisers and fire engines to construction and specialty trucks. Inflatables, face painting, hot beverages and donuts will be available onsite. Resident registration is \$7/child; non-resident \$9/child. Visit [www.wbparks.org/event/tat](http://www.wbparks.org/event/tat) for more information.

**MAY**

**May 1 & 2**

**Household Hazardous Waste Collection & Paper Shredding Event**

May 1: 4-6 p.m.

May 2: 9 a.m.-Noon

Jewish Community Center

6600 West Maple Road

A free and safe way to dispose of your hazardous waste! See page 15 for more information.



**May 2**

**Free Comic Book Day**

10 a.m.

West Bloomfield Township Public Library

4600 Walnut Lake Road

Ages 5+ are invited to celebrate Free Comic Book Day at the library and choose from a variety of free comics. Limit two comics per person while supplies last. For more information, visit [www.wbplib.org](http://www.wbplib.org).

**May 8**

**2026 Greater West Bloomfield Michigan Week Community Awards Breakfast**

7 a.m.

Temple Israel

5725 Walnut Lake Road

Michigan Week was launched in 1954 by Don Weeks, designed to celebrate and promote the state's history, culture and economy. It highlights local talent, values and excellence. Each year, the non-partisan and nonprofit Greater West Bloomfield Michigan Week Committee hosts the award ceremony to celebrate community achievement and volunteer leadership. This year's theme is "United in Service, Together We Shine." Registration is \$35/person. Learn more at [www.michiganweek.org](http://www.michiganweek.org).

**May 8**

**Grown-Up Book Fair**

6:30 p.m.

West Bloomfield Township Public Library

Library

4600 Walnut Lake Road

Join the library for a night of all things books. Shop for books and merchandise from Schuler Books, enjoy book trivia and make book-themed crafts. Learn more at [www.wbplib.org](http://www.wbplib.org).



**May 9**

**Community Garage Sale**

8 a.m.-12 p.m.

Drake Sports Park

6801 Drake Road

Support West Bloomfield neighbors and reduce waste by buying and selling everything from home goods to clothing and much more. Booth fee is \$10. Learn more at [www.wbparks.org/event/community-garage-sale](http://www.wbparks.org/event/community-garage-sale).

**PLEASE NOTE: Event details may have changed. Please check event website or social pages for the most up-to-date information.**

**AROUND West Bloomfield**  
**March - May**

**ONGOING**

● **Food Truck Tuesdays** will begin on May 5 and run through September, on Tuesdays from 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m., at 4600 Walnut Lake Road, in the tent area next to the main library.



**MARCH**

**March 27**

**Egg Scramble**

4-7 p.m.

Drake Sports Park

6801 Drake Road

Children ages 1-8 are invited to pick a timeslot to register for age-appropriate egg hunts to earn prizes. Registration is \$9/child. Hot beverages and donuts will be available for purchase as well as the Friendship Factory with their "Build Your Own Best Furry Friend" station. Register at [www.wbparks.org/event/eggscramble](http://www.wbparks.org/event/eggscramble).

**APRIL**

**April 16**

**Earth Day Celebration**

4-6 p.m.

Drake Sports Park

6801 Drake Road

This free event will feature activities for the whole family including a recycled craft, live animal interactions, free seedlings to the first 50 families, a guided nature hike and activities and displays. Pre-register at [www.wbparks.org/event/earth-day-celebration](http://www.wbparks.org/event/earth-day-celebration).



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# COME RECYCLE WITH US!



## New Location



The Jewish Community Center  
 6600 West Maple Road

### Boat Wrap RECYCLING!

April 1 - May 31

Please see additional information on PAGE 15.

MAY 1	MAY 2	SEP 18	SEP 19
4:00 - 6:00 p.m.	9:00 a.m. - Noon	4:00 - 6:00 p.m.	9:00 a.m. - Noon

### SHUT-IN SERVICE

Township staff with pick-up hazardous waste and electronics from homebound West Bloomfield residents on **May 1 and Sept. 18**. All items MUST be curbside and weigh fewer than 50 lbs. **By Appointment Only.** Call (248) 706-2411 to schedule.

For more information on all recycling, please visit [wbtownship.org](http://wbtownship.org), or call (248) 451-4818. A comprehensive list of acceptable and unacceptable items can be found on PAGE 15 inside *West Bloomfield Today*. All Household Hazardous Waste & Shredding events are held at The Jewish Community Center (The J) at 6600 W Maple Road, and open to all residents of West Bloomfield Township, Orchard Lake Village, Sylvan Lake and Keego Harbor. (ID Required)