



**Johnston
Senior Center**

Johnston Senior Spotlight

A PUBLICATION OF THE JOHNSTON SENIOR CENTER

FALL 2025



From the Director's Desk

Dear Friends,

Introducing our newly designed newsletter! We have given it a new name and look, and streamlined the information, so it is easier to read and focused on what our members want to know.



Focusing on the "new" is what we are doing this Fall, bringing new programs, guests and events to the Senior Center in accordance with our new mission statement:

Our Mission, Vision and Promise

To empower adults 55+ to live active, healthy, happy lifestyles by reimagining aging through activities, shared interests, experiences and perspectives, that create a culture and community of belonging.

We are also looking forward to welcoming some special guests. The Most Rev. Bruce A. Lewandowski, bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Providence, will visit on Thursday, October 23 at noon, to meet the members of the center, hear our stories of spiritual insights, and tell of his own journey of faith.

On Thursday, December 4, celebrated chef historian Walter Potenza will take us on a journey through time with the **History of Italians in Rhode Island**, the captivating story of Italian immigration in the state, tracing the footsteps of early Italian settlers who left their

homeland in pursuit of the American dream. The event starts at 10:30 a.m., and lunch will be served. The fee is \$5.

Construction of the new bocce court is underway and looking good. Our players will be throwing those bocce balls on a state-of-the-art court next spring.

And don't forget about our upcoming holiday celebrations – November 20 Thanksgiving luncheon and December 18 Christmas party. Sign up is required.

Our Senior Center is one of the main reasons why our town is so special. It is a place to connect with friends, discover new hobbies, and find the support you need to live a full and active life. Whatever your interest, you will find it here!

Wishing everyone a great Fall,

Richard J. DelFino, Jr.
Executive Director

Message from the Mayor



Dear Seniors,

I hope you all had a wonderful summer full of time spent with family and friends, plenty of sunshine, and stayed in good health. As the leaves begin to change and we

turn toward cooler days, I want to share some exciting events coming up in Johnston, and to let you know how grateful I am for what we've built together.

What's Coming Up

3rd Annual Columbus Day Food Truck Feast

Mark your calendars for **October 13, 2025**, from 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. at Johnston Memorial Park. This promises to be a great day: tons of food trucks, live music, a celebration of Italian heritage, and family fun. Admission is free, just pay for what you choose to eat or drink.

Trunk or Treat at Johnston Memorial Park

Join us on **Friday, October 24**, from 5 - 8 p.m. for a fun, festive evening. There will be candy, music, food trucks, and we encourage everyone to come in costume. Bring your loved ones, neighbors, children, and grandchildren! The kids love this one.

Operations Director's Report

Dear Seniors,

Congratulations to the Johnston Senior Center's bocce players!

The 2nd Annual Bocce Tournament was held September 19 at the Citizens Campus in Johnston with ten teams competing for the Mayor's Cup. The winners' names will be



engraved on the permanent trophy that is on display at the Senior Center.

The Center's bocce court will look different next year. The Town Council has approved the construction of a new bocce court that will start this Fall.

A few other notable events that will be taking place here at the Center are a "Master Your Computer" class, a free and basic computer course that will help users navigate simple computer skills such as composing emails and online shopping using fun, hands-on lessons. The first class will be held November 4 at 10 a.m. followed by classes November 11, 18 and 25. Sign up is at the front desk.

Also, a free Fraud Prevention Seminar will be held Thursday, October 23 at 10 a.m. The class is sponsored by Washington Trust Bank. Fraud detection specialist, S. Benjamin Headley, and Lauren Younger, AVP branch manager in Johnston, will provide valuable information to help seniors from being scammed. Register at the front desk.

Please be sure to check our website for updates weekly at jscri.org.

Bob Piscione
Operations Director

I would like to thank our Senior Center Director, Richard Delfino and his entire staff. I would also like to thank you, the members of the Johnston Senior Center. The entire community of our members truly makes the Center a wonderful place to be.

Please stay healthy, stay active, and know that your presence in our Senior Center community means the world. If there's anything you'd like to see more of, drop by and tell us – we're always listening.

Best,

Mayor Joseph M. Polisena, Jr.

ON THE SCENE

Senior Showcase

Highlighting the real-life stories and contributions of our members.



Carmino DeRobbio

Mr. DeRobbio moved to Blackberry Knoll Way in 1974 because he was able to buy an affordable piece of land and build a house in what he considered a country-like setting that was not far from the city. At the time, there were only three houses on the street.

Back then, J&K Lighting was located on Greenville Avenue, and he could buy lighting fixtures for his new home on a payment plan, something that not many stores did for their customers.

Throughout a half century of living in Johnston, Mr. DeRobbio witnessed numerous changes in the town, most notably new grocery stores and banks, and the growth in population. One major plus, he said, is that the taxes have remained stable, unlike other cities and towns in the state.

A respiratory care practitioner at Rhode Island Hospital, Mr. DeRobbio felt it was his duty to remain active and serve the community when he retired. He is the longest serving member of the Senior

Center, having held several volunteer roles dating back to when the center was located on Priscilla Lane. Forty years later, he is still one of its most trusted members.

He remembers when the center delivered meals to shut-ins, and the time that he found a man on the floor at one of his stops. He immediately called the rescue and was credited with helping to save the man's life.

He has also served on the Senior Center's Board of Directors, the activities staff, worked in facilities and operations, and is currently part of its security team.

But it was the annual Kids' Bingo for elementary school children that he enjoyed the most, calling the numbers and watching the kids play.

"They got so excited when they won," he said.

Carmino DeRobbio, 84, says he will never move from Johnston. "I love it here," he said.

All Aboard:

Johnston Senior Center members heading out for a Newport Trolley Ride and Guided Tour on September 16. The tour included drives by the Gilded Age mansions, the homes of Judge Judy and Jay Leno, and along the coast for a seaside view of the incoming cruise ships.



Dr. D Hangs up his Stethoscope:

Dr. Vincent D'Alessandro, 92, a well-known pediatrician in the town, who retired in August after 62 years of practice, was given the Key to the Town by Johnston Mayor Joseph Polisena Jr., on September 9, during a surprise presentation at the Johnston Senior Center, with many of D'Alessandro's former patients attending the event. The mayor was also once a patient of Dr. D, as he is affectionately known, and said that with his retirement "is the end of an era."



Getting Crafty: Fall edible art centerpieces using tangerines, oranges, and celery created by members (clockwise (L-R) Doreen Cunnon, Melissa Pallotta, Joy Draine, Phyllis Izzi, Angela Zannini, and Beverly Scuncio.

RECIPE BOX | Family favorite recipes provided by our Johnston Senior Center members.

Pumpkin Chocolate Chip Cake from Ilda Fillipeni

Ilda has been baking this cake since 1977. Her children liked it so much that they requested it for their birthday cakes.

3 cups flour
2 cups sugar
4 eggs
1 cup oil
1 teaspoon salt
1 can pumpkin
2 teaspoons baking soda
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips, plus ¼ cup for topping

Mix together all ingredients except chocolate chips. Beat until batter is a golden yellow. Fold in chocolate chips. Place batter into a greased tube or bundt pan. Sprinkle ¼ cup of chocolate chips on top. Bake at 350 degrees for one hour.

IN THE NEWS | And the Mayor's Trophy Goes to...

The Johnston Senior Center's Team 2.

For the second consecutive year, the Johnston Senior Center hosted the JSPCC's (Johnston Senior Collaboration Committee) annual Bocce Ball Tournament and Awards ceremony, on September 19, with a full day of activities.

The event began at the Citizens campus in Johnston with an elaborate barbecue lunch at noon and the first set of games. The final game was held at the Johnston Senior Center courtyard at 4 p.m. followed by a buffet dinner and awards ceremony, where the Mayor's Championship Cup was awarded to the Johnston Senior Center's winning team members Peter Giarrusso, Diana Hudson, and Frank and Joyce Sciotto.

"Bocce ball has transcended the generations, and this tournament is a great way for the Johnston Senior facilities in town to collaborate with our community partners in a fun, engaging activity that is enjoyed by young and old alike," said

Richard J. Delfino Jr., executive director of the Johnston Senior Center.

Fun facts about bocce ball:

- Bocce is the third most popular sport in the world, after soccer and golf.
- Bocce in its current form was played as early as 264 B.C. in Rome. Though no one knows the exact timing of its origin, stone balls dating back to 9,000 B.C. were discovered in Turkey.
- Notable bocce players have included the Roman Emperor Augustus, the ancient Greek physician Hippocrates and the astronomer Galileo.
- George Washington built a bocce court at Mount Vernon in the 1780s.
- About 25 million people play bocce in the U.S. alone.
- The pallino (small target ball) must cross the middle of the court in order for the game to



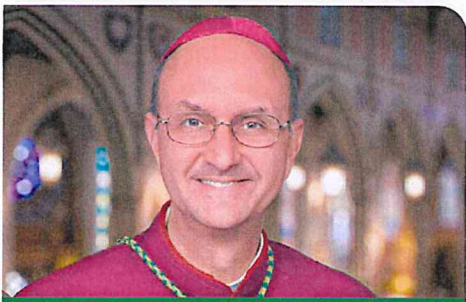
Bocce Tournament winners are Team 2 from the Johnston Senior Center. (L-R) Peter Giarrusso, Diana Hudson, Frank Sciotto, Joyce Sciotto.

start. If not, it must be rethrown or given to the other team to throw.

- A game is typically played to 12 points in the U.S., though some games can go to 15 or 21 points.
- Regulation bocce courts are 91' long x 13' wide. Variations are acceptable if foul lines, mid-court lines and inbound markers are designated.



CUE 'EM UP: Johnston players practicing for the annual Johnston/Cranston Pool Tournament, on Wednesday, Oct. 8, at the Johnston Senior Center.



Bishop Bruce A. Lewandowski

Protect yourself from fraud and scammers – Fraud Prevention Seminar, October 23

October is National Cybersecurity Month and the perfect time to learn how to keep yourself and your loved ones safe from fraud, scams, identity theft and elder financial exploitation, by learning to identify the red flags and common tactics scammers use in a free seminar, on October 23, from 10–11 a.m. at the Johnston Senior Center. The seminar is presented by Washington Trust bank's AVP fraud officer S. Benjamin Headley and AVP branch manager Lauren Younger.

Bishop to visit Johnston Senior Center

The Johnston Senior Center will host The Most Rev. Bruce A. Lewandowski, bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Providence, on Thursday, October 23 at noon, to meet the members of the center, hear our stories and spiritual insights, and tell of his own journey of faith.

The late Pope Francis named Lewandowski the 10th bishop of the Providence diocese in April and was installed in June.

"Our membership is largely Catholic and the new Bishop's visit will be a great source of inspiration and spiritual uplift for our community," said Richard J. Delfino Jr., executive director of the Johnston Senior Center.

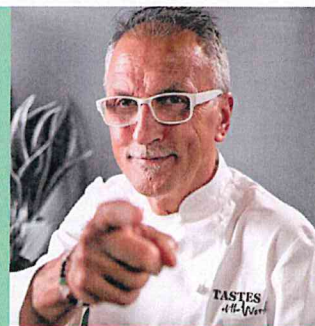
Lewandowski came to Providence from the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

Born in Toledo, Ohio, he grew up on a family farm in Lima, Ohio with his four siblings.

Lewandowski attended the seminary at St. Mary's College in Erie, Pennsylvania, Saint Alphonsus College in Suffield, Connecticut, and Holy Redeemer College in Washington, D.C. In 1988, Lewandowski studied theology at Washington Theological Union.

throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, settling in Providence's Federal Hill, Johnston and North Providence to work in mills and on farms. Johnston soon became home to many who sought a better life and eventually became one of the most Italian-populated towns in the United States., with a significant portion of its population claiming Italian ancestry.

"Chef Walter is a master when it comes to advancing the stature of Italian history and culinary culture in the state. Having him bring his unique brand of storytelling and knowledge to our members and town residents is a real treasure," said Richard J. Delfino Jr., executive director of the Johnston Senior Center.



Chef Walter Potenza

The History of Italians in Rhode Island as told by Chef Walter Potenza

Take a journey through time as the Johnston Senior Center presents the History of Italians in Rhode Island, the captivating story of Italian immigration in the state, tracing the footsteps of early Italian settlers who left their homeland in pursuit of the American dream, as told by celebrated chef historian Walter Potenza, on Thursday, December 4 at 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. The event is open to the public. Lunch is included. Fee is \$5.

Potenza has been named one of the Top 50 Italian Master Chefs in the World.

With a passion for culinary arts and history, Potenza has dedicated his life to preserving and celebrating the rich heritage of Italian immigrants in Rhode Island. A renowned expert in the field, he brings knowledge and insight into the struggles, triumphs, and cultural contributions by the Italians that settled in the region, and the lasting impact they made.

Italian immigrants, primarily from Southern Italy, first arrived in Rhode Island in the 1870s and

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SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Join us for these Holiday Celebrations

Thursday, Nov. 20 – Thanksgiving Luncheon

Thursday, Dec. 18 – Christmas Party

Details to come!

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