

JOHNSTON SENIOR CENTER

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<https://jscri.org>



20

YEARS

Celebrating in this
Landmark Location

THE JOHNSTON SENIOR SPOTLIGHT | A PUBLICATION OF THE JOHNSTON SENIOR CENTER | SUMMER 2026

From the Director's Desk

Dear Friends,

Summer is officially here, and the Johnston Senior Center has been buzzing with activity as the celebrations for our 20th Anniversary continue, as well as lots of upgrades around the building.



So far, we've hosted a May Breakfast for our elected officials and community partners, a NONNAS movie watch party, and the Aging (Dis)Gracefully comedy show featuring Rhode Island's own Hall of Fame comedians Charlie Hall and Doreen Collins.

There are more fun events planned for the remainder of the year, including our 20th Anniversary Dinner Dance Sept. 19. A complete list can be found at www.jscri.org or by stopping into the center.

Speaking of community partners, you will see many pieces of beautiful new furniture around the center, including a complete conference room set-up, all courtesy of Citizens. The Garden Club has

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.



been busy planting and pruning all the colorful flowers and plants on the grounds. Be sure to check out the new bocce court that is ready for play, and Citizens will once again be our partner for the annual tournament in Sept.

As the temperatures rise, your health and safety remain our top priority. Please remember to stay hydrated, limit outdoor chores to the cooler morning or evening hours, and never hesitate to drop into the center if you need a cool place to relax.

I also want to take a minute to thank our amazing staff and volunteers, advisory board, and Friends of the Center for making all of our work possible.

Let's celebrate this summer season with continued joy and connections.

Sincerely,

Richard J. DelFino, Jr.
Executive Director

Assistant Director's Report



It's bocce season at the Senior Center. Although the surrounding area of the new bocce court is not 100 percent complete, the actual court is. Our members are already out there playing and practicing for the Third Annual Bocce

Tournament on September 18. The main play will be at the Citizens campus with the championship game at the Senior Center. Citizens continues to be a great sponsor for this event and will be supplying food and soft drinks along with tents to keep us cool and clean portable bathrooms.

Speaking of Citizens, I'm sure you have noticed a considerable amount of new furniture at the Senior Center. More specifically, new entry way sofa and chairs, a beautiful conference table in our computer room, a number of couches spread throughout our facility, all donated by Citizens. We are so grateful for their partnership.

Our 20-week club, that is part of our 20th Anniversary celebration, is set for its first payout on July 3, continuing each week for 20 weeks. Good luck to all that have purchased tickets.

Our second celebratory fundraiser is the August Calendar Raffle with daily drawings for gift cards of at least \$50 every day in August. Hope you got your \$10 ticket!

Just a reminder that our newsletters are now digital, with a limited number of printed copies available at the front desk. It is also on our website jscri.com and can be emailed or texted directly to you. Please reach out to our member service front desk to be sure all of your contact information is correct.

Bob Piscione
Assistant Director

On behalf of the Town of Johnston, I wish you a safe, healthy, and enjoyable summer season.

Warm regards,
Mayor Joseph M. Polisena, Jr.

Message from the Mayor



Summer has arrived in Johnston, and I encourage all our senior residents to take full advantage of the many opportunities available throughout our Town during these warmer months. One of our most popular summer

traditions, Food Trucks in the Park, returns to Johnston Memorial Park on Thursday, July 9. It's a wonderful opportunity to enjoy great food, live entertainment, and time with family, friends, and neighbors in one of Johnston's most beautiful outdoor settings.

I am also pleased to highlight the Johnston Police Department's "Walk with Cops" program, which continues throughout the summer and falls on July 15, Aug. 12, Aug. 26, Sept. 9, Sept. 23, and Oct. 7. This bi-weekly initiative is designed to foster meaningful connections between our police officers and Johnston's senior residents. Officers will spend time visiting seniors living in nursing and rehabilitation facilities throughout

town, helping to build trust, strengthen relationships, and create positive interactions that benefit our entire community.

Another community favorite, National Night Out, will bring residents, public safety personnel, and local organizations together for an evening dedicated to strengthening neighborhood partnerships and promoting public safety. This annual event is a great opportunity to meet members of our police and fire departments, learn about community resources, and celebrate the strong spirit that makes Johnston such a special place to live.

Families looking to cool off this summer can also enjoy the Splash Pad at Johnston Memorial Park, which officially opened for the season on June 22. It's a fantastic amenity that residents of all ages can enjoy throughout the summer.

Most importantly, I encourage our seniors to make the most of the outstanding programs, activities, classes, and trips offered through the Johnston Senior Center this season. Summer is the perfect time to get out, enjoy the beautiful weather, and take advantage of everything our community has to offer.

ON THE SCENE | For and about seniors

May Breakfast to thank community partners, elected officials



Experts say it is the most important meal of the day, but a May breakfast was also a great way to thank our valued community partners and elected officials for their continuous support of the Johnston Senior Center's programs and services. The event was hosted by Jen Burns of Anchor Bay at Pocasset and Loraine DiLorenzo of Cherry Hill Manor, with a menu prepared and served by Executive Chef Marvin Carter from the Bridge at Cherry Hill.

MEETING TIME: The conference room at the Johnston Senior Center has a new look, thanks to a donation by Citizens of a new, cherrywood table and 20 ergonomically designed chairs. Citizens has been a valued collaborative partner of the center for many years, and hosting events at their main campus in Johnston, including the annual bocce tournament.



IN BLOOM: The gazebo at the entrance to the center is decorated with flowers planted and tended by the Garden Club.

Johnston Senior Center presents Aging (Dis)Gracefully comedy show

If there is one thing everyone at the Johnston Senior Center has in common, it is age(ing). Every member is 55 and over, and everyone has a unique story to tell about the aging process, but none quite as comical as in *Aging (Dis)Gracefully*, a cabaret show created by Rhode Island comedians Charlie Hall and Doreen Collins of Ocean State Follies fame, that presents the nuances of getting older in songs, stand-up comedy, parodies, and audience interaction.

The sketch comedy show was presented to a sellout crowd at the Johnston Senior Center on June 11 as part of their 20th anniversary celebration. Refreshments were provided courtesy of United Health Care, Anchor Bay at Pocasset and Cherry Hill Manor.

The comedy duo entered the ballroom to the tune of "Still Crazy After All These Years" by Paul Simon and delivered 90-minute performance of relatable aging experiences that kept the audience laughing and nodding.

"We don't talk about politics anymore, we talk about aging," said Hall, referencing his former show that mocked R.I. politics and politicians. "We're here to support gray rights, not gay rights." There are certain indicators of aging, he explained. "The F-word now stands for fiber and A-I means acid indigestion," he said. "And when the candles cost more than the cake."

Collins and Hall did their dance rendition of A-A-R-P to the music of the disco classic YMCA before Hall came out as a geriatric poet laureate and recited a poem about senior moments. Collins, dressed as a



Above:
Charlie Hall and Doreen Collins

Below:
Granny in *Aging Disgracefully*



stereotypical matron, waddled into the room putting food and napkins in her purse, then sang a funny song about being forgotten because you're old but still being here.

Old TV ads, drug commercials and elder versions of popular songs such as "I wear my bifocals at night," "On the commode again, and "I can see clearly now my glaucoma is gone" were all satirized.

How do seniors make romantic connections? Hall asked.

"At wakes," Collins said.

Collins ended the show with her impression of Cher's song Believe that parodied the singer's multiple plastic surgeries, longevity and relationships with younger men.

"Did you know that Cher is training to become a midwife?" she asked the audience. "She wants to be there when her next boyfriend is born."

Jean McGinn of North Providence came to the show as a guest of a member. "I had so much fun, I had to join the Johnston Senior Center," she said.

The comedy show was one of the many events and activities planned to celebrate the Johnston Senior Center's 20th anniversary at the Hartford Avenue location.

Grumpy old Rymin' Simon



IN THE NEWS

At the table with Nonna – a movie watch-party that inspired memories of food, family and traditions

Cast of NONNAS shown at the Johnston Senior Center inter-generational watch party, April 20.

"Who wouldn't want to eat their grandmother's cooking?"

That's the question Joe Scaravella (Vince Vaughn) asked as he considered buying a restaurant to prepare Italian family recipes in the 2025 Netflix film NONNAS, and what prompted a lively, heartfelt discussion among more than 50 people of all ages, at a movie watch party at the Johnston Senior Center on April 20, hosted in partnership with the R.I. Office of Healthy Aging (OHA). The movie presentation was an OHA pilot project to study the impact of community engagement among senior citizens across the state.

NONNAS is based on the true story of Scaravella, owner of Enoteca Maria in Staten Island, N. Y., the Italian restaurant he opened to honor his late mother, hiring actual grandmothers (Nonnas in Italian) as the chefs. The traditions and nurturing role of grandmothers underlined the premise of the movie.

Moviegoers were treated to homemade meatball sandwiches and pastries while watching the film, then discussed the themes that anchor us to our

roots and shape our identities.

Youth ambassadors working with the Office of Healthy Aging provided their perspectives on heritage and family traditions, and asked questions for the older adults in the audience that focused on memories invoked from watching the movie. Youth Ambassadors are teens 14-18 learning about community building.

Since more than half the population of Johnston claim Italian ancestry, the second largest in the country (after Fairfield, New Jersey), memories of extended family gathering around the table for Sunday dinner and the Italian tradition of the Feast of the Seven Fishes (La Vigilia) on Christmas Eve were mentioned repeatedly as fading among the younger generations, as well as passing down family recipes.

Though still in their teens, the younger audience members could relate to the prominent themes of the movie. Kara Barsolou, 18, who comes



from a family of chefs, said that watching the arguments in the kitchen reminded her of her own family cooking together. Danna Sanchez, 16, said that the cooking scenes were similar to watching her grandmother preparing authentic Columbian food from her heritage.

Sol Lowe, 17, from Scotland, especially liked that the movie's main character was willing to chase his dreams. "It is better to do something than nothing, even if you fail," he said.



CRAFTY LADIES: the craft club makes everything from holiday décor to candy dishes.

Ann Marie Arruda likes to dance. She and her husband Jim took ballroom dancing lessons after Jim suffered a heart attack 20 years ago and his doctor recommended dancing for exercise. They went to ballrooms regularly, but as dance venues closed and fewer dance floors available, Ann Marie formed an afternoon dance group that meets at the Johnston Senior Center on the second Tuesday of the month where any member, with or without a partner, is welcome to dance anything from the waltz to swing to country line dances. About 25-30 people attend each month and that number is growing.

"Dancing is good for your mind, body and soul," she said.

Known as a weekday meal site and for its day trips and bingos, the Johnston Senior Center also hosts many game and activity clubs that take place throughout the week or during the appropriate season.

"We are designed as a social club for older adults who want to live active, healthy and enjoyable lifestyles," said Richard J. Delfino Jr., executive

Join the club...or start a new one, at the Johnston Senior Center

director of the Johnston Senior Center.

There is only one requirement for membership—you must be 55 or older to join, no matter where you live. The membership fee is \$12 a year.

When Diane Mackie first joined the center, she noticed that there were very few flowers on the grounds. An enthusiastic gardener, she organized a garden club suitable for older adults that didn't require lifting or bending. The beautiful flowers that bloom every spring are the result.

Groups that meet daily are the walking club and exercise classes for varied skill levels, pool in the billiards room, and the puzzle-makers who assemble scenes that are glued, matted and available for sale. Studies have shown that jigsaw puzzles can help to improve cognitive functions, reduce stress and enhance mood.

Monday through Wednesday, it is a full house for the weekly Hi Lo Jack games. Some members have been playing the card game since the center opened 20 years ago. Bingo, the perennial favorite, takes over the entire dining room on Thursdays and Fridays with over 50 players each day.

For the past 12 years, the 10-member craft club has designed various works of art—topiaries, candles, wood works, holiday décor, tote bags—and have even dabbled in weaving and calligraphy. Their work is on display around the center.

A floor-to-ceiling closet stacked with over 50 handmade quilts belongs to the eight-member quilting club that meets every Tuesday. The quilts are donated to hospitals, nursing homes,



The Ballroom Dance club gets into the groove with line dancing at the Johnston Senior Center.

churches and various charitable organizations around the state.

Thursdays are for Mahjong. The tile game that originated in mid-to-late 19th century China, gained international popularity in the 1920s, is considered good brain exercise, providing mental stimulation through strategic thinking and social interaction.

A quiet corner in the back of the center features a well-stocked library where the book club gathers. Organized by sisters Mary Rawson and Barbara Kuras, the 23-member club meets the last Tuesday of the month to discuss their latest read.

Summer means bocce at the center. A new, state-of-the-art bocce court is nearly finished, just in time for summer play and the center's annual tournament.

All these club offerings are in addition to the center's many special events such as musical guests, comedy shows, and movies.

"If anyone wants to start a new club, we are always open to new ideas," Delfino said.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS



**Johnston
Senior
Center**

**The Place For Active Living
and Healthy Aging**

**JOHNSTON SENIOR
CENTER**
20th Anniversary

*Dinner
Dance*

*Hosted by
Advisory Board*

**SATURDAY
SEPT. 19, 2026
6 P.M.**

TICKETS \$20 PERSON;
\$35 COUPLE.
LIMITED SEATING.
MUSIC BY VINI AMES

Bringing the beauty of the beach indoors with beach glass art at the Johnston Senior Center

The Johnston Senior Center hosted a beach glass art workshop on June 24 where participants created designs using colored stones, beach glass, sand, seashells and starfish, all arranged in a frame with a splash of glitter.

The artwork made decorative use of beach glass finds to bring the beauty of the beach indoors.

The event was hosted by Loraine DiLorenzo of Cherry Hill Manor and Jen Burns of Anchor Bay at Pocasset, longtime community partners of the center. DiLorenzo instructed the participants in their creations.

"I wanted to create something original to use in my home," said Sandra Piscione who attended the workshop.

The event is part of a year-long celebration of the Johnston Senior Center's 20th anniversary at the Johnston Senior Center. Upcoming events include an ice cream cake demonstration and social, a disco dance party, costume and holiday parties, and a dinner dance in honor of past members and dignitaries.

"I love to give back to the community and to work with seniors. It's where my heart is," said Burns, who is the director of community relations for Anchor Bay.

The beach glass art workshop was so well received that a second one will be added next month, along with a floral arranging class in time for Fall, said Joanne DeFusco, activities director at the Johnston Senior Center.

Loraine DiLorenzo, marketing and sales director of Cherry Hill Manor, instructing participants in creating beach glass art.



Vicki Brockmiller enjoying creating her beach glass art creation.



Annual Bocce Tournament Sept. 18 in partnership with Citizens



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