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SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2021 | HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

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Protesters: Racial justice progress too slow

Susan Vela Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Black, brown and white protesters alike crowded some of the nation's streets last summer because of the tragic deaths of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd, two African-Americans killed by police.

"Black Lives Matter! Black Lives Matter!" they chanted, their cries echoing through Detroit and its suburbs.

Activists and their followers made their statements outside Livonia City Hall, Westland Police Department, and other municipal landmarks.

Then they took their voices inside, asking and praying for leaders to listen

to their grievances and do something about the inequalities that propelled them to risk their chosen futures in the first place.

The months passed and COVID-19 settled in. In communities most targeted by whispers of racism, protesters saw change that some would call nominal, others would call huge.

Hometown Life caught up with some of the demonstrators who, for the most part, predicted more outcry in 2021 because elected bodies are moving too slowly and inefficiently to produce real change in their communities.

See PROGRESS, Page 6A



Paul Shepich, superintendent of the Clarenceville Public Schools, stands outside his home in Livonia on Feb. 15.
JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Clarenceville superintendent battles cancer amid pandemic

Shelby Tankersley Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

March 13 began what would become the most stressful schooling season of Paul Shepich's 38-year career.

After the initial closing in the COVID-19 pandemic's beginning days, Clarenceville Public Schools, along with school districts across Michigan, grappled with how and when to return to in-person schooling. Shepich and other superintendents continue to face a dilemma of how to best educate students while also keeping students and staff as safe as possible.

Not to mention, reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic is something most ev-

erybody has an opinion on. Locally, students, parents and staff have not been shy in sharing those opinions with schools districts.

"It is tremendously, and I can't stress that enough, tremendously stressful," Shepich said. "There are no right answers. It depends on what side of the ledger people fall on, and you're always going to be wrong 50 percent of the time because of that."

All the while adding to that work-related stress, Shepich has been battling cancer.

In January 2019, he found out he has stage three nodular lymphocyte-

See CANCER, Page 5A

"I think it's important for people to know that we don't know what's going on behind everyone else's closed doors in their lives. ... Everybody is doing the best they can, and we don't have to understand it all."

Paul Shepich
Superintendent, Clarenceville Public Schools

Canton aims to conquer worst roads in township

Ed Wright Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

The recent revelation of which Canton Township roads would be the primary targets of 2021 improvement dollars was followed by an insightful discussion regarding ASR (alkali-silica reaction) — the "concrete cancer" that causes most tire-flattening potholes — and what to do about it.

During a study session focused on the township's 2021 Road Improvement Program, the board of trustees approved a plan to spend approximately \$6.9 million on the following projects:

- Rehabilitation and repair work on Canton Center Road from Cherry Hill to Ford Road (estimated cost: \$1.8 million)
- Repairs on Sheldon Road, from Cherry Hill to Ford Road (estimated cost: \$1.1 million)

See ROADS, Page 3A

Plans for Westland hookah lounge move forward

David Veselenak Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

The first business planned at the redeveloped shopping center at Ann Arbor Trail and Middlebelt took a step forward earlier this month.

The Westland Planning Commission recommended approval Feb. 2 for a special land use for a hookah lounge planned in the former Burger King building at the shopping center on the southeast corner of the intersection. The lounge would be just one of two businesses in the building: a takeout restaurant would occupy part of the building in addition to the hookah lounge.

It's expected some customers at the smoking lounge could use the restaurant next door and carry in food from

See HOOKAH, Page 6A



Oakland County gives juvenile lifers another chance

Bill Laitner

Detroit Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

Keeping a vow she made during her election campaign last year, Oakland County Prosecutor Karen McDonald announced she has taken steps to give “juvenile lifers” a chance for parole.

McDonald said in a news release that she had filed “resentencing notices” with the Michigan Attorney General’s Office and with Oakland County Circuit Court on behalf of 22 state prison inmates who’d committed crimes in Oakland County. A resentencing notice amounts to a detailed review of a case and a recommendation for a new sen-

tence with a possibility for parole.

Each of the 22 inmates had been convicted of homicide as a juvenile and sentenced to life in prison with no possibility of parole -- a sentence declared unconstitutional by the United States Supreme Court in a sweeping 2012 decision called *Miller v. Alabama*.

In taking the action, McDonald withdrew her predecessor’s motions to reimpose sentences of life without parole on 20 of those inmates. After McDonald and her staff reviewed all of the cases, she reduced that number to just two inmates for whom she is recommending keeping their sentences of life without parole, a spokesman said. The others now have a chance to be resentenced

with “time-bound” terms of years, the spokesman said. The announcement is not a policy change but, instead, the prosecutor’s efforts “to follow the law,” the spokesman said.

Despite the U.S. Supreme Court rulings, many prosecutors in Michigan dragged their feet on the high court’s order to review the cases of those who were sentenced as youths to life without parole. Soon after a civil liberties lawyer in Ann Arbor together with the Michigan ACLU filed suit in federal court in Detroit on behalf of more than 200 Michigan “juvenile lifers.”

That lawsuit led in 2019 to a decision called *Hill v. Whitmer*, a settlement that listed Gov. Gretchen Whitmer as the de-

fendant representing the state of Michigan. The settlement called for Michigan prosecutors, in effect, to stop sitting on their hands and act on the Supreme Court’s order.

“The Hill settlement called for prosecutors to reconsider each of those sentences and commit to a timeline for resentencing eligible individuals,” McDonald said in the release.

“As prosecutor, my primary obligation is to keep Oakland County communities safe and to follow the law. In rendering these decisions, I am obeying the Constitution, and pursuing sentences that will keep our communities safe until these individuals are no longer a threat,” she said.



Kirsten Cicchella, supervisor of Farmington Public School's new Early Childhood Center, leads a tour of the facility Feb. 8. The building can accommodate almost 500 students, but at this time only about 200 are attending classes.

PHOTOS BY JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Farmington district opens enrollment for new early childhood center

The Farmington Public Schools’ Farmington Early Childhood Center (FECC) opened enrollment for all families for the 2021-22 school year.

The Farmington Early Childhood Center is a brand new facility designed for early learners. The new building is equipped with child-sized furniture, bathrooms and learning resources.

Thoughtful planning went into the creation of a large gross motor room, gymnasium and an outdoor play area with several sections for different learning and play activities, school officials said. Learning opportunities are even provided in the hallways where students can engage with letters, numbers, shapes, patterns, colors and more.

Farmington Public Schools has been providing early childhood programs for more than 50 years. These programs provide high quality, developmentally appropriate and nurturing educational experiences for young children. The district currently offers a variety of programming for children that are two-and-a-half to four years of age.

The Farmington Early Childhood Center is fully licensed by the State of Michigan and accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. All early childhood teachers are highly qualified and receive

ongoing professional development. The curriculum for all programs is research-based and aligned with Farmington Public Schools’ K-12 curriculum.

Families can register online at farmington.k12.mi.us/early-childhood. Registration can also be done at any time throughout the year as space is available.

To enroll your child(ren), fill out the online enrollment forms and pay the \$125 enrollment fee. Once you have completed the forms, call FECC to make an appointment at 248-489-3808. Please bring all completed documentation. Children are placed into classes once this process is complete and all documentation is received at FECC.

There are no residency requirements for tuition-based programs. Free programs are available through Head Start or GSRP (Great Start Readiness Program) for qualifying families. These programs are available for three- and four-year-old children. Various criteria must be met for each grant program. If you are interested in learning more about Head Start or GSRP visit farmington.k12.mi.us/domain/1175.

“We hope that you start young and finish strong with Farmington Public Schools’ Early Childhood Programs,” said Program Director Kirsten Cicchella.



Educator Subrenia Walker leads some of her charges in the complex Feb. 8.



The center features a circular Gross Motor Room so kids can exercise and play.

hometownlife.com

Observer & Eccentric Newspapers
PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

Published Sunday and Thursday by
Observer & Eccentric Media

Newsroom Contacts:

Phil Allmen, Content Strategist
Mobile: 248-396-3870
Email: pallmen@hometownlife.com
Follow us on Facebook: @OEHometown

Subscription Rates:

Newsstand price: \$1.50
\$104 per 12 months home delivery

Home Delivery:

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Mon.-Fri. 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Sunday 7:30 a.m. to noon
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Livonia native wins big on ‘The Price is Right’

Shelby Tankersley Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK – MICHIGAN

Growing up, Sheila Rupp spent a lot of time watching “The Price is Right.” So for her, competing on the show was a childhood dream recognized.

“It’s always been one of my favorite shows,” Rupp said. “I was an afternoon kindergartener, and I would watch the show with my mom every day when I had lunch. So, I’ve been a fan for decades.”

Rupp, who grew up in Livonia, auditioned for the show after seeing a casting call on Facebook. She ended up on an episode that aired Tuesday. The show features a variety of games in which contestants guess the price of everyday items.

While competing on the 49-year-old game show, which airs on CBS, Rupp ended up winning \$10,000 and a new Mazda3. She surprised herself by taking the risks she did, but figured she might as well make the most of the



Livonia native Sheila Rupp smiles as she watches herself win on “The Price is Right.” Rupp won \$10,000 and a Mazda3. COURTESY OF SHEILA RUPP

opportunity.

“I thought, ‘Well, I’m here and I have nothing to lose,’” she said.

Rupp said it was incredible to see the studio in-person. Though her hour spent there passed by quickly, she said it was a positive experience.

“It’s kind of one of those childhood things,” she said. “Everybody kind of

knows the iconic show, so it’s really surreal. I couldn’t believe it was there.”

Rupp currently lives in Los Angeles, where her husband is stationed as he serves in the United States Air Force.

“Livonia will always be home, that’s where we go to visit our families,” she said. “But we go where the Air Force takes us.”

Roads

Continued from Page 1A

Repairs on Haggerty Road, from Michigan Avenue to Van Born (estimated cost: \$1.25 million)

- Annual deposit to Michigan Department of Transportation for Ford Road Boulevard Project (\$1 million)
- A local match program involving 13 subdivisions (\$500,000)

Funding for the projects was generated by the township's successful 2018 roads millage campaign, which will allow Canton to spend an average of \$5.6 million annually until 2039 on road repairs and improvements, and the creation of a boulevard separating east- and west-bound traffic on Ford Road from Lotz to Sheldon roads.

An interactive map showing the township's road projects can be found on its website.

The estimated cost of 2021 road-improvement projects exceeds the average annual expenditure budget because 2020 projects came in under budget due in part to the coronavirus pandemic.

"The nice thing about the millage stretching over 20 years is that it gives us flexibility each year on how much we use, depending on what projects are deemed necessary," Director of Municipal Services Jade Smith explained.

Canton Center woes

A hot topic during the study session was why heavily-traveled Canton Center Road, both south and north of Warren Road, is scarred with axle-jarring potholes just two years after the Wayne County Roads Division spent \$2.1 million to "fix" the stretch of roadway.

Township Clerk Michael Siegrist suggested it may be cost-effective to move forward with a total reconstruct of the affected area.

"One thing I do not like doing is putting good money after bad money, and Canton Center looks like it's already rife for additional repairs," Siegrist said. "We might be better off if the concrete is pulled out and replaced with new concrete instead of putting \$1 million to \$2 million into it every other year.

"I know it's partly a funding issue. My dream is to get some state legislators and federal legislators together to create both a state and federal funding mecha-



Plenty of these sharp-edged potholes await drivers along Canton Center Road near Warren. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

nism that could help resolve ASR issues, with my focus being in Canton."

The culprit behind much of Canton's ongoing struggles with keeping roadways smooth is ASR, a common chemical reaction in concrete that can lead to serious cracking that results in critical structural problems, Engineering Services Manager Bill Serchak explained.

Serchak revealed that an alternative to complete roadway replacement is a less-expensive practice called "asphalt capping", which recently was completed successfully in the Fairways West subdivision near the intersection of Cherry Hill and Beck roads.

"Capping may seem like a band-aid approach, but if we can extend a road's life 15 to 20 years, it would be a cheaper proposition than a huge reconstruction project," Serchak said.

Subdivision advocate

Canton's Sunflower subdivision, one of the largest subdivisions in Michigan, has stretches of roadway that resident and roads watchdog Robert Parker describes as battlefield-esque.

A retired automotive engineer, Park-

er has made it his mission to work with the township and Wayne County to get the roughest patches of his neighborhood's roads upgraded.

One two-street area near the west boundary of Sunflower — particularly along Swanmere Road and Lambeth Way — is so chewed up, it's evolved into an auto mechanic shop owner's dream, he said.

"Sections of those roads have been like driving over a battlefield for over five years," said Parker. "The township representatives I've talked to have been very considerate in listening to my concerns, as has our Wayne County Commissioner Melissa Daub, but it's in the county's hands."

The tire-swallowing potholes that have been regular residents of Sunflower for at least five years, Parker, said, are patched over periodically with cold patch, a temporary fix that lasts, at most, a couple of weeks, Parker said.

"What they need is a hot-patch treatment that is more expensive and can last, from what I understand, three to five years, but the county is restricted to simply 'maintaining' the subdivision roads and not repairing them, so it ar-

gues that it is limited in what it can do. It's a frustrating situation, to say the least."

While Parker admits he is far from a roads-surfacing expert, his observations show that roads in Sunflower south of Warren Road — the newer section of the 40-year-old development — are in rougher shape than those north of Warren.

And there's a reason, he theorizes.

"In the late-'80s before the newer portions of Sunflower were built, the Environmental Protection Agency ruled that a material called fly ash had to be removed from road surfaces because of its high-acidity rate, for one thing," Parker said. "My theory is the roads are in such rough shape in south Sunflower because they were made with asphalt that doesn't contain fly ash, so it's more susceptible to cracking and breaking down."

Parker has developed a strong rapport with township engineers and hopes to someday coordinate a plan that will work toward developing a longer-term fix for his sub's beat-down roads.

Contact reporter Ed Wright at ewright@hometownlife.com.



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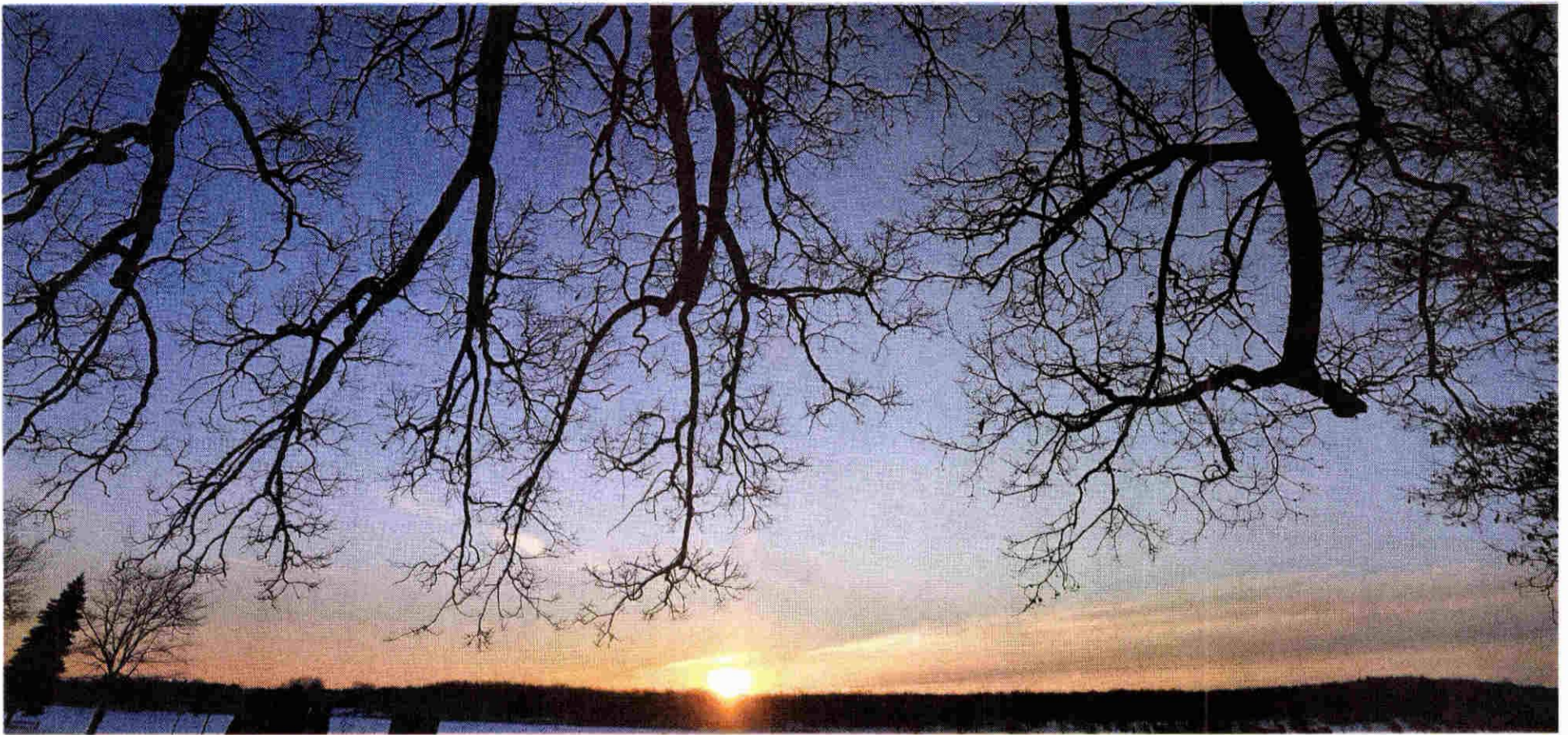
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The rising sun peeks over the horizon about 7:30 a.m. Feb. 11 at Kensington Metropark in Milford. PHOTOS BY JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Winter's chill at Kensington Metropark



John Heider
HometownLife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Arriving before sunrise Feb. 11 at Kensington Metropark, the first thing I noticed was how still it is.

Nothing seemed to be moving, and with temperatures below 10 degrees and only a slight breeze, the entirety of the park - four-legged creatures, birds, trees, and lakes - seemed frozen in an understandably rigid pose.

The 4,400-acre park lies off Interstate 96 between Milford and Kensington roads. Its main feature is Kent Lake, part of an impoundment of the Huron River system, which meanders through the park's center and occupies much of its total area.

While the park is populated in spring,

summer and fall with hikers, bikers, boaters, fishers, bird watchers and swimmers, in winter it's not exactly bustling. In the nearly four hours I spent there driving and hiking about, I saw less than a dozen people.

The park's non-human inhabitants, while not everywhere or obvious to the eyes, are part of the landscape once you let things settle in. Moments into the park, I noticed a whitetail deer in the forest near the road. And then another one and then - well, I guess half a dozen of them were hanging out until they noticed me noticing them.

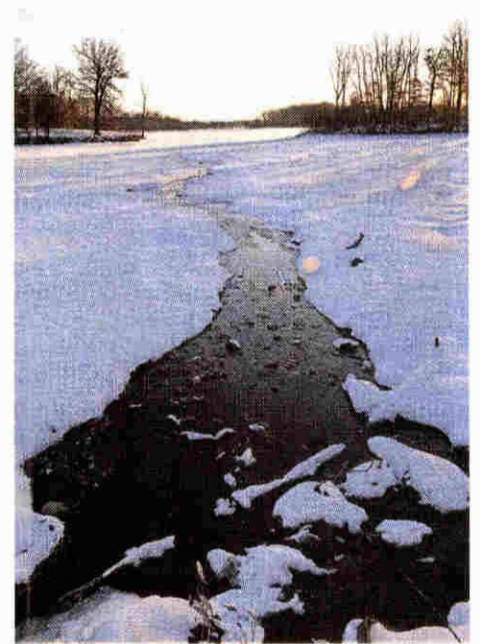
With a wiggle of their tails, they bolted across Huron River Parkway to the deeper forest for forage or a snooze, or both.

After my deer encounter, I drove to the west side of Kent Lake to its Maple Beach area to see what I could record on

See **CHILL**, Page 5A



A male cardinal perches in the branches of a tamarack tree near the park's nature center.



A small spring seeping from Wildwing Lake is the only unfrozen water on Kent Lake near the nature center.

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A grove of oak trees is warmed by the rising sun at Kensington Metropark.

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Teen incompetent to stand murder trial – for now

Susan Vela HometownLife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK – MICHIGAN

Found incompetent to stand trial, Southgate teen Gerelle Rhan is not entirely clear of felony second-degree murder and reckless driving charges.

A Westland District Court judge has merely declared him incompetent ... for now, according to court officials.

The 19-year-old will face the charges once again if the court finds proof he's mentally able to understand court proceedings and their consequences.

"It doesn't mean the case is done," Maria Miller, spokeswoman for the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office, said.

She confirmed that Rhan is currently being evaluated and monitored to determine if he could become competent in the future.

Wayne County prosecutors accused Rhan of driving a vehicle that ran a red light before crashing into a vehicle and killing Chris Ward, 48, of Dearborn on May 20.

Cancer

Continued from Page 1A

predominant Hodgkin lymphoma. It's rare, especially for someone his age.

But, like any good educator, Shepich says it's not about him. So he persists.

Undergoing chemo

Shepich suspected something was wrong in December 2018, but wasn't diagnosed until about a month later. Because his particular brand of cancer doesn't spread quickly, he didn't have to start chemotherapy treatments until December 2020.

"It stays in your lymph nodes and it spreads through those," Shepich explained. "Mine was in my chest, my neck, my underarms, my back and I had a little bit in the abdomen as well."

So far, Shepich has undergone three chemo treatments. He'll do at least three more, which should wrap up in March.

His doctors won't know exactly how well the treatments are working until then.

Chemo is administered in 21-day cycles. For Shepich, days six through 14

of that cycle are difficult. He gets fatigue, headaches and symptoms akin to acid reflux.

"I mean these drugs, they call them poison," he said. "When they come in to give you the injections and they're in these gowns — they don't want that stuff touching them at all if there was an accident because it really is poisonous. So, you know you're getting something put in you that's not normal. It does attack the cancer, but it attacks pretty much everything else too."

Still, he won't complain.

"I'm probably one of the lucky ones, honestly," Shepich said. "It hasn't been as bad as it could be at this stage I don't think."

Getting the job done

Shepich said he feels blessed the Clarenceville Board of Education has allowed him to work exclusively from home for the time being. His doctors say it's the safest way for him to keep serving the district for now, but being at home has its challenges.

"Being away from the kids is probably the hardest thing for me," he admitted. "I'm a people person, I love being around the kids and the teachers. Not being able to do that has taken a toll on me. But, I'm learning to put myself first."

The superintendent does enjoy spending time with his wife and adult son, who recently moved home to care for him. He said they and his central office staff are an incredible support system.

"When you have a smaller district, it's a little different in some capacity because we really get to know these families at a different level," he said. "When these difficult times hit, that's when the people in these kinds of districts step up."

Shepich has mostly kept his cancer battle on the down low. He's confident he'll come out the other side of this OK and doesn't want people feeling sorry for him.

But as a superintendent during this most unorthodox school year, he thinks his story at this moment can remind people they never know what someone is dealing with behind the scenes.

"I think it's important for people to know that we don't know what's going on behind everyone else's closed doors in their lives," he said. "I think we always need to remember that. Everybody is doing the best they can, and we don't have to understand it all."

Contact reporter Shelby Tankersley at stankersle@hometownlife.com or 248-305-0448. Follow her on Twitter @shelby_tankk.



A whitetail deer bounds through the forest of Kensington Metropark in Milford just before sunrise Feb. 11. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Chill

Continued from Page 4A

my Nikon camera. And even though it was now past 7:30 a.m. and the sun was coming up, the only thing moving was nearby I-96's steady stream of commuters. The forest was still, the lake was frozen and I could see nobody else within a mile. A few moments of a winter's quiet solitude is OK in my books.

The rest of my morning was spent making photographs with my Nikon d750. Not too many — just 570 digital files over the next few hours. If there was one overarching theme to the photos, it was that shadows were part of everything I framed.

This time of year, with the light coming in cold and harsh, there were shadows on the snow where rabbits and deer had run about; shadows ridging the bark

of oak trees slowly warmed by the sun; and shadows cast on the cardinals perched on a barren tamarack tree, cast by nearby branches.

On my way out of the park I stopped near Kensington's Nature Center on its west side, a popular stop for bird watchers. Nearby trails and a boardwalk lead to the popular heron rookery — its feathered friends won't visit until April or so. I hit the trails with my telephoto lens looking for smaller winged friends.

I soon found dozens of birds flitting about the forest and frozen swamp area: cardinals, northern juncos, chickadees, bluejays, downy woodpeckers and field sparrows. Jumping from branch to branch, hopping about the snow-covered trails and flying overhead, the tiny creatures proved that the park remains decidedly alive, even in the midst of winter.

John Heider is the staff photographer for Hometown Life.

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Progress

Continued from Page 1A

Bringing communities together

Hilary Smith Ramirez already was bothered by the number of times her African-American husband gets pulled over when she came across some post-Floyd Facebook vitriol.

She and two other women with Livonia ties splintered off into their own separate chat, agreeing they had to do something.

"We were planning one protest, and it just cascaded," said Smith Ramirez, a founding member of Livonia Citizens Caring About Black Lives. "Now, here we are today still fighting with city council, fighting with the police department, trying to get the bare minimum of respect and acknowledgment."

"It's tough. It takes a lot of time and is extremely frustrating. We've had to beg and plead and cajole to get things done."

In the past year, she has met amazing people who obviously consider themselves allies. Smith Ramirez also has been disheartened by the number of hateful people she's come across.

Still pursuing, among other things, a citizens oversight commission for the police department, she's optimistic that the revival of police pensions could lead to more police job applications and a more diverse, qualified police force.

She'd like folks to remember that Livonia Citizens Caring About Black Lives is intended as a community-building group.

"We're not here to cause problems," she said. "We want to help solve problems and hopefully bring Livonia citizens together in doing so."

She's promising more activities focused on unity.

"Livonia is becoming more diverse, and I want to make sure that those kids and any kids that my husband and I adopt will feel safe and feel included in the Livonia community," Smith Ramirez said. "I work with everyone under the sun. I just want to try to help especially the kids get a much better feel for what the world is actually like."

Protesting

Westland's Edward Pruett remains dissatisfied with progress made since the initial protests.

He was the vanguard who went from protesting with others to initiating a non-profit movement, "A Better Westland," aimed at creating a better city for everyone.

His elected leaders took some action, declaring racism a public health crisis and creating a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Commission.

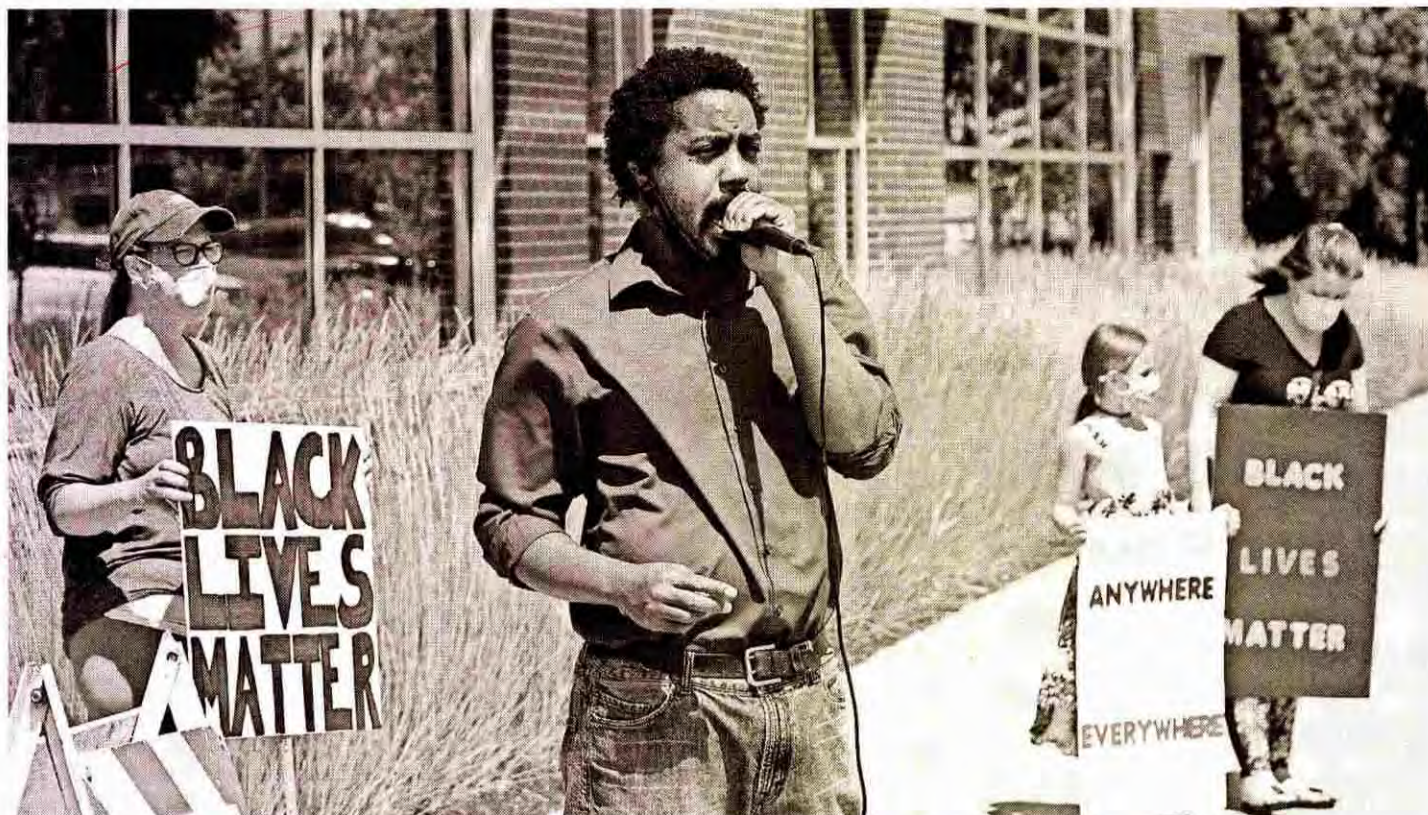
The city's police department also went online with a new dashboard intended to be transparent about citation and arrest data in the city.

Still, Pruett has not forgotten the early 2020 arrest of an autistic man from Detroit. The department fired Officer Kristopher Landis because of his use of force with a collapsible baton.

"A lot of it is just superficial," Pruett said of the changes that are happening.

A pastor by trade and calling, Pruett said the much-touted Listening Tour series seems to have fallen short of what organizers intended. The tour of community leaders listening to their constituents about police conduct went online because of COVID-19.

"If we were to ask ourselves, 'Have

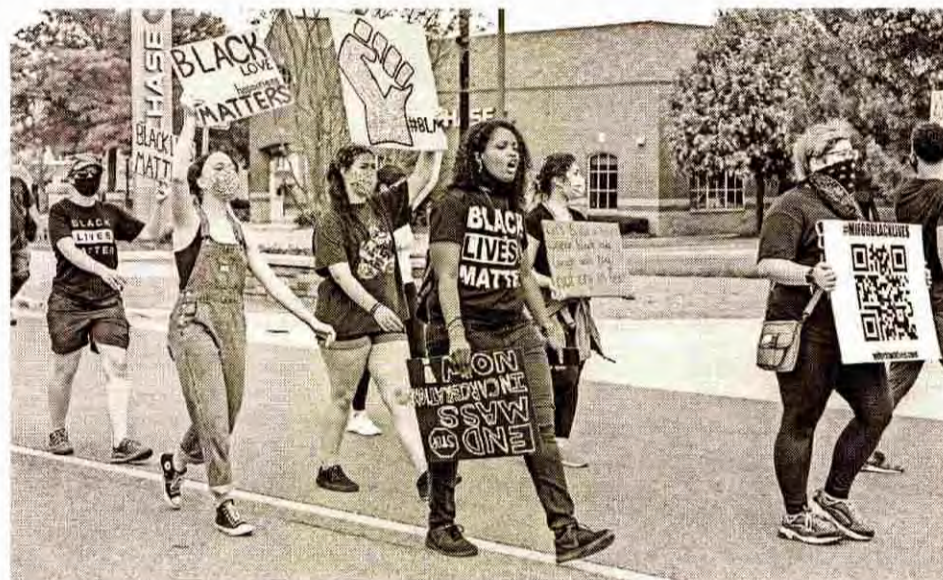


Edward Pruett, center, is joined by Ashley Stevens, left, and other supporters in front of Westland City Hall in June.

JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM



Livonia resident Hilary Smith Ramirez took an active role in the summer's Black Lives Matter protests.



Alexandria Hughes, center, took a stance against racial injustice in the summer.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS

we truly made progress?' We have not," Pruett said. "We haven't gone far enough. There's a lot of placating going on."

"I'm happy to see people standing up for their rights. That's what we've needed for so long."

He expects more protests "if necessary."

Change is never easy

Alexandria Hughes, a political activist for years, was moved by the diverse crowds waving signs and raising their voices against racial injustices over the summer.

The Redford Township woman wondered if the protesters were finally coming together for the right cause and, if so, what their collective energy could achieve.

Hughes kept her attention on a few metro Detroit communities including Livonia, where she claims her family has been racially profiled.

Hughes attended Livonia City Council meetings and said some progress happened during tough conversations that held parties accountable.

In the next year, she would like to see the city council address racial profiling. She hopes for legislation similar to the Community Safety Act in Providence,

Rhode Island.

That legislation prohibits discriminatory profiling, establishes how police officers should document and collect data from traffic and pedestrian stops; mandates greater transparency and accountability in police-community interactions; and establishes new protections for juveniles, immigrants, and transgender individuals.

Hughes spoke to Hometown Life the day after President Donald Trump's supporters stormed the U.S. Capitol, killing a handful and injuring dozens.

"That was disgusting and it was hard to watch," Hughes said. "It infuriated me. It just feels wrong to see all those people storm the Capitol. We would have been shot and killed. I would have been dead."

"It's more reason to keep protesting, to keep having these meetings with city council members."

After President Trump

James Spalding has lived in many southeastern Michigan communities including Farmington Hills.

Now a Dearborn Heights resident, he laughed when asked if he considered the accusations about President Donald Trump being racist accurate.

"Oh, yeah," he said, releasing a hearty

laugh. "That's an understatement."

He considers himself a "white ally" to the Black Lives Matter movement. He never could physically stand acts of injustice and racism, and he chose to say enough is enough by demonstrating with others after Floyd's May 25 death.

While recovering from a protest-related elbow injury, he continued to support President Joe Biden's election. And now that Trump is gone, he wants to work toward keeping Biden on what he considers the right course.

He stays invested in what's happening in Detroit, the metropolis that unerringly affects the suburbs.

"The fight's going on, and I think that the level of organization and connection between activists there has been really good," Spalding said. "I think that that's going to continue to grow. Pressure is going to continue to mount and we're going to see real change in Detroit in the next year or two."

He expects more protests with smaller crowds unless there's another catalyzing tragedy like Floyd's.

"I do believe that we will see more protests," Spalding said. "I think you'll see better organization and hopefully better mutual aid organization to communities along side of it."

Contact reporter Susan Vela at svela@hometownlife.com.

Hookah

Continued from Page 1A

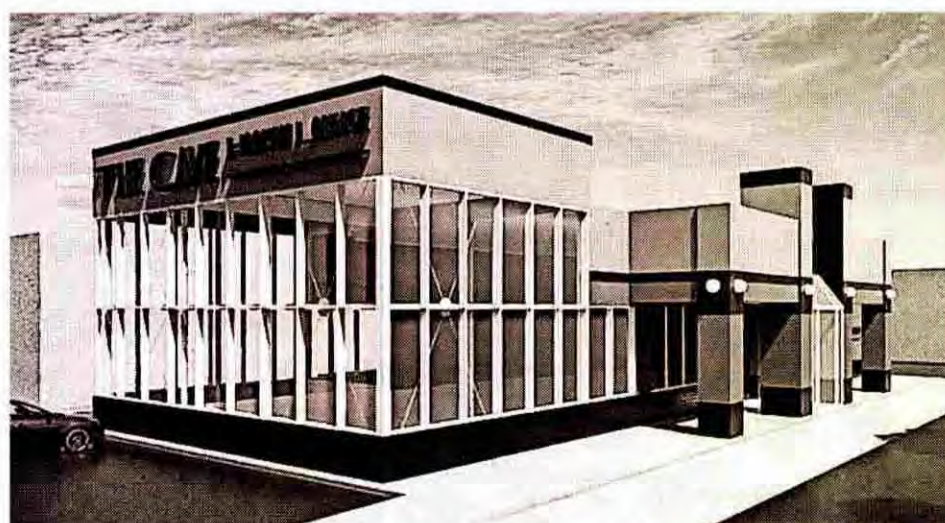
there, as the lounge cannot operate as a restaurant on its own due to Michigan's indoor smoking ban that took effect more than a decade ago.

"There will also be a takeout restaurant located within the building but partitioned and split off from the smoking lounge," Mohamed Ayoub, the city's planning director, said. "This is to comply with state indoor smoking laws."

The lounge, which would operate from noon to 2 a.m. every day, would only allow hookah products and not serve any alcohol, said business owner Salim Saddagh.

Saddagh, who's also owned Blue Moon Hookah Lounge in Dearborn Heights, said he was excited to open the lounge in Westland. He said the target demographic would be older people looking for a way to spend a night out and not for younger crowds looking for more than just hookah.

"It's for elderly people and the nights they want to go out and chill. No drinking, no alcohol," he said. "Hopefully we're going to work together and succeed."



A rendering shows what the proposed hookah lounge in Westland could look like. It would be located in the building that formerly held a Burger King.

COURTESY OF THE CITY OF WESTLAND

With the unanimous recommended approval from the planning commission, the project now heads to the city council for its review and determination.

The redevelopment of the Arbor Town Square shopping center took a big step in January when plans to split the shopping center up into separate parcels was also reviewed by the planning

commission. The center, completely vacant for many years, would be divided up into several separate parcels. Plans for locating businesses include the hookah lounge and restaurant, as well as a woodworking business and shop selling furniture. More details on those plans are expected to be revealed some time in the future.

Commissioner David Rappaport

brought up the current COVID-19 pandemic and its possible effect on the business. Given that a hookah lounge will see guest exhale particles back into the air, he wondered if there were any special precautions needed to be taken into account given how the coronavirus is known to spread.

"There are certainly COVID concerns when it comes to eateries," he said. "My concern is more generally about a smoking lounge where there are actual particulates being put in there air where potentially COVID 19 could hitch a ride."

Saddagh said he planned on following all state guidelines when it came to COVID-19 compliance.

"I don't think our atmosphere is going to be worse than a club or a bar or a regular restaurant," he said. "Whatever the state goes with, whatever the experts go with, I'll go with."

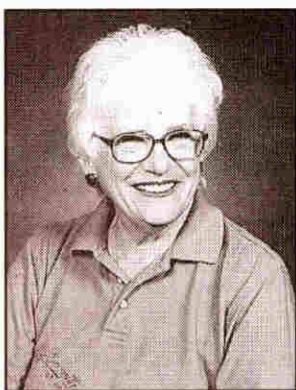
Current orders from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services do not permit smoking indoors at the present time, though that could change by the time the hookah lounge opens, which currently does not have an estimated opening date.

Contact reporter David Veselenak at dveselenak@hometownlife.com or 734-678-6728. Follow him on Twitter @davidveselenak.

Obituaries

Marian Sayward West

ANN ARBOR - Marian Sayward West, age 94 of Ann Arbor, passed away on February 8, 2021.



She was born in Grosse Pointe, Michigan on February 10, 1926 to her parents, Richard Arthur and Isabell (née Guthrie) Sayward. Marian is the beloved and devoted wife of the late Frank West who passed away in 1986 and, loving mother of three children – John West, Richard West and Anne West.

Marian received her Bachelor's Degree with a major in French and minor in Spanish and Portuguese with honors from the University of Michigan. In 1972, she returned to school and earned a Master's Degree in Library Science.

Friends may visit at the First Presbyterian Church of Plymouth, 701 Church Street, Plymouth on Saturday, February 13, 2021 beginning at 2:30 P.M. until the time of the Funeral Service beginning at 3:00 P.M.

Marian will be laid to rest at Michigan Memorial Park Cemetery in Flat Rock, Michigan.

Those who wish to honor the memory of Marian Sayward West are invited to consider a contribution to the School of Information at the University of Michigan, 105 South State Street, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109 and Alpha Xi Delta Foundation, 8702 Founders Road, Indianapolis, Indiana 46268.

Contribution envelopes will be available at the Church.



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SPORTS



North Farmington's Basheer Jihad snags a rebound during the game against Farmington on Tuesday in Farmington. North Farmington won, 71-54. PHOTOS BY JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

North Farmington beats crosstown rival Farmington

Colin Gay HometownLife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

North Farmington boys basketball head coach Todd Negoshian knows his team is still adjusting to what the 2021 season has to offer.

Tuesday the Raiders faced OAA Red and crosstown rival Farmington in an empty gym — with Farmington Public Schools not allowing spectators in the stands for any of its winter sporting events — masked up.

"We're still trying to get used to it, we're still trying to get everything figured out," Negoshian said. "We didn't play well, I don't think, but we still scored 70-some points."

North Farmington (3-0) continued its win streak to open the season, beating rival Farmington (2-2) on the road, 71-54.

North Farmington currently holds a four-game win streak against the Fal-

cons, last losing to Farmington Dec. 22, 2016.

Through its three-game win streak to start the year, Negoshian knows the success comes from his seniors, those guys who have been with the program for four years and know what to expect out of Raider basketball.

"To have those guys, it's irreplaceable," he said.

Against rival Farmington, Basheer Jihad, Justin Ross and Deon Hayes, North Farmington's three seniors, made that clear, combining for 59 of the Raiders' 71 points.

In the first quarter, Hayes took control, using his speed to record steals and rebounds, leading to scores in transition, putting up six of the team's 19 first-quarter points.

But heading into the second half with a 33-27 lead, Jihad and Ross took

See RIVALS, Page 2B



Farmington's Robert Davis Jr. launches a shot.

HOCKEY PREVIEW

Meet the teams of KLAA East

Colin Gay HometownLife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

The Michigan high school hockey season has started.

After an extended pause due to the COVID-19 pandemic, teams are back on the ice, preparing for a run at a state title.

This season, the postseason regional round is scheduled for March 15-20, the state quarterfinals are March 23-24, the state semifinals are March 25-26 and the state finals are scheduled for March 27.

Here's a look at how teams in the KLAA East look like in 2021.

Livonia Stevenson

Head coach: David Mitchell — 13th season

2019-20 record: 25-3-1, first in KLAA East; Lost to Trenton, 5-1, in the Division 2 state quarterfinal

Key returners: Senior defender Nick Justice, senior forward Brenden Heard, senior goalkeeper Brenden Stroble

Season outlook: Livonia Stevenson's goal each season is to win its last game. The Spartans failed to do that during the 2019-20 season, falling to Trenton in the state quarterfinal, 5-1.

But head coach David Mitchell said it has been a long six months since then. And while the Trenton loss remains at the back of the team's mind as motivation, the team has to start from the beginning.

"You have to hit the reset button. You have to go back to fundamentals. You have to go back to your values and your core beliefs," Mitchell said. "And I think we have done that."

In the 2021 season, Stevenson will be senior-heavy, returning 13 juniors from last year's KLAA East first-place finisher, including defender and leading scorer Nick Justice and starting goalkeeper Brenden Stroble.

While having so many returners is a "luxury" for Mitchell, his goal is to look internally, not only at how good this team is, but how good they could be with one more year of development.

"We're going to have to make sure we build and evolve and not continue to do some of the things that we did that put us in some precarious situations last year," Mitchell said. "We're going to have to make sure we play a mature brand of hockey and we play like a mature team."

Salem

Head coach: Ryan Ossendmacher — 14th season

2019-20 record: 18-11, second in

See HOCKEY, Page 2B

Wolfkostin, Chen team up for national championship

Colin Gay HometownLife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Katarina Wolfkostin and Jeffrey Chen traveled dramatically different paths to the ice.

For Wolfkostin, an Ann Arbor native, it started with a spontaneous family trip to the ice rink to escape a broken air conditioner when she was 5. She quickly

realized the enjoyment of gliding across the ice, feeling free and light.

For Chen, it was in his family's DNA. Taking the ice for the first time at age 2, he developed as his sister Karen Chen blossomed into a national champion and an Olympian. When Jeffrey quit for a short time, his sister was the one who brought him back. He hasn't looked back since.

While their paths were seemingly incompatible, Wolfkostin and Chen soon found they would be the perfect match, joining together as ice skating partners. And after months of training at Novi Ice Arena with coach Igor Shpilband, the two won the U.S. Figure Skating National Championship in the junior ice dancing competition.

But this was a championship that

was nearly squashed due to a freak injury.

One week before leaving for Las Vegas for the competition, Chen fell, twisted his knee. He immediately saw a doctor who told him he had a partially torn ACL and that he should take four-six weeks off.

See SKATERS, Page 2B

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Great first jobs for high school students

Jessica L. Mendes
ZipRecruiter.com

As a high school student, you constantly hear about the importance of education. There are countless resources available to help you succeed in school.

When it comes to finding a great job? Far fewer resources.

Whether you need money to pay for your car insurance, gas money or just entertainment, there are great jobs out there for high school students — even if you have no real work experience. If you are responsible, well-mannered and motivated, you can find a job that pays well and is flexible enough to work around your school schedule.

Here are a few of the best jobs for high school students with no experience:

Barista

These makers of fancy coffee drinks are in high demand. Customers often leave tips. As a bonus, certain high-profile chains offer tuition assistance for college.

Catering staff

Most catering events take place in the evenings or on weekends. Think parties, weddings and other celebrations. Catering staff do several tasks, from setting up to waiting tables.

Customer service representative

In person, over the phone or through online chat, customer service reps provide assistance and support — answering questions about products and services, processing orders and returns, and



FREEPIK/PEXELS IMAGES

and community centers hire lifeguards; some require CPR certification.

Tutor

Are you good at a certain subject? Someone else is struggling with it. Turn your talent into a job as a tutor and help others reach their potential.

Valet parking attendant

Restaurants, hotels, shopping malls and even medical facilities offer valet parking to their patrons. With a driver's license and clean driving record, you could be paid — and tipped — to park all sorts of cars.

responding to complaints.

Food delivery driver

You need a driver's license and a clean driving record to be a delivery driver. On top of an hourly wage, pizza delivery drivers usually earn tips.

Front desk receptionist

If you can answer phone calls and greet people with a smile, front desk receptionist could be the job for you. Many businesses need someone at the front to answer



questions and direct guests to the right place — hotels, spas, gyms and yoga studios, to name a few.

Lifeguard

The ability to swim is a must for any lifeguard job. You get to hang out by the pool, making sure people stay safe while having fun or working out. Many gyms

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