

THE MELTING POT NEWSLETTER



Frederick Abisi Adult Education Center
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Elizabeth McKiernan, Director

January 2023

New Year's Resolutions!



The new year is here! And January brings the opportunity for a fresh start. Whether you are an ESOL or HSE student, having good attendance is key in achieving your educational goals.

What goals will you set to make 2023 your year? As always, we're here to help you.

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We are deeply saddened to learn of the passing of one of our students, Sabrina Scott, a beloved member of the Adult Ed Community.




The mornings are getting colder.
The building doors do not open until 8:30am.
Please plan your arrival accordingly.

HOLIDAY PARTY



Everyone had a good time at our holiday celebration. We participated in many activities including crafts and raffles, and enjoyed delicious food, sweet treats, and hot chocolate.

A special thank you goes out to teachers who brought food and helped make this event successful.

Congratulations to all the students who received Market Basket gift cards and won prizes!

HOLIDAY TREE RAFFLE

In keeping with our tradition, the AAEC Holiday Tree Raffle successfully raised **\$590**. This money was donated to ***It's All About the Kids Foundation***. This is a local non-profit organization that helps Greater Lowell families and children with food, clothing, and gifts during the holiday season, and provides emergency assistance year-round. They work with social workers and guidance counselors in the Lowell Public Schools and other local agencies, serving over 300 families.

Thank you to those who helped to sell the raffle tickets and to everyone who bought the tickets to help make this fundraiser so successful.

Congratulations to Patricia Robertson, an HSE student, who won the Holiday Money Tree.



ELIZABETH K. TSAPATSARIS



Elizabeth Tsapatsaris was a dedicated teacher at our adult education center for many years. In 1988, a memorial scholarship was founded to honor her passion for teaching adults.

In addition to three scholarships offered at graduation each year, the Tsapatsaris family donated 20 Market Basket gift cards to be awarded to AAEC students at our holiday celebration.

A special thank you goes to Charlie and Alexis Tsapatsaris and the Curtis Family, generous benefactors of the Abisi Adult Education Center, for their continued support.

SCHOOL INFORMATION

HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY (HSE) TESTING INFORMATION



The Massachusetts High School Equivalency credential is issued by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to those who have passed the HiSET exam, the GED exam, or a combination of the two exams. HSE Candidates need to create an account at www.GED.com and/or www.hiset.org to schedule testing appointments and view their test scores.

The HiSET exam was acquired by a new company, PSI. All HiSET testers must create a myHiSET Account at hiset.org. If you have an ETS account, use the same email address and last name to ensure that all your data (including test scores) is transferred.

HSE candidates are now able to *combine GED® and HiSET® subtest scores to complete the requirements of their High School Equivalency Credential*. Candidates will continue to see their subtest scores on the respective assessment websites, and the combined scores will be available when the student completes their testing, and the transcript is generated at www.diplomasender.com.

GED Testing is free for Massachusetts residents! When scheduling a subject test for the first time (at a GED test center), use the voucher code: **MAFREEGED** during checkout. When scheduling a re-test (at a GED test center), use the voucher code: **MARETAKE**.

AAEC is an approved Test Center. We offer testing appointments for the HiSET on paper, HiSET on Computer, and GED (computer only). **GED Test appointments fill up quickly. We recommend that you check back frequently in case there have been any cancellations.**

HSE Upcoming Testing Dates:

HiSET Computer-Based Testing	HiSET Paper-Based Testing Dates GED Computer Based Testing	GED Computer Testing
(Thursday afternoons @ 12:30pm)	(Friday evenings @ 5:00pm and 7:00pm & Saturday mornings @ 8:00am, 9:30am, and 11:00am)	(Thursday afternoons @ 12:30pm)
January 12 th February 2 nd	January 20 th and January 21 st February 10 th and January 11 th	January 26 th February 16 th
One subject test may be scheduled.	One or more tests may be scheduled, depending on appointment availability.	Math, Science, or Social Studies may be scheduled.

Have questions? Talk to our HSE Testing Specialist, Denise, or one of our HSE staff members.

SCHOOL CLOSING/DELAYS

If there is **NO SCHOOL** in the Lowell Public Schools, all AAEC Morning and Evening classes are cancelled.

If there is a **one-hour delay**, Morning (in-person and remote) ESOL and HSE classes will begin at 10:00am. Evening classes will meet at the regularly scheduled time.

School cancellation or delay information can be found by:

- Visiting our website, <https://www.lowell.k12.ma.us/adulted>
- Looking on Facebook
- Watching the local news
- Listening to WCAP (980AM) or WBZ (1-3-AM)



ATTENDANCE MATTERS

“The Road to Success Begins with Good Attendance”

You are expected to be in class every day and to be on time. If you miss too many days, you risk losing your space to someone who is on our waiting list.

Don't forget to let us know if you are going to be absent. You can:

- Email us at:
 - ESOL Classes**—apearson@lowell.k12.ma.us or
 - HSE Classes**—bgoodridge@lowell.k12.ma.us
- Let your teacher know.



VISITOR POLICY

Lowell Public School Policy states all outside visitors must report to the main office and sign in and out. For the safety of all our AAEC students, outside visitors are not allowed to contact students during class time or to interrupt classes. If you forgot something at home or someone needs to leave something for you, make arrangements to meet them after class. Deliveries and drop-offs are not



accepted in the office. Please make sure you have all of your materials and items before you leave for school. Your class time is short and important for your continued success. If there is an emergency, please speak with the office staff, and they will assist you.

We love children, but children are not allowed in the school.

CITIZENSHIP CORNER

As we look back on the Fall of 2022, we want to thank everyone -students and staff- for supporting our citizenship preparation program.

Abisi Adult Education Center offered three citizenship preparation classes during the fall session. All classes were offered once a week for 90 minutes. Our in-person class was held on Thursdays from 9:30 am – 11:00 am. Our two remote classes, taught via ZOOM, were offered on Tuesdays from 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm and Wednesdays from 7:15 pm – 8:45 pm.

In citizenship classes, our students learned about the N-400, Application for Naturalization, and the 100 civics questions. They also practiced their reading, writing, and speaking skills.

In all, 25 students completed the citizenship class: 16 AAEC students and 9 members from the community.

Congratulations, New Citizens!

AAEC would like to congratulate everyone who passed their citizenship tests this past fall. Thank you for letting us know.

If you pass your citizenship test, please tell your ESOL teachers, Adriana, or Gail. We would like to celebrate your achievement, too!

New Citizenship Classes

Registration for new citizenship preparation classes will begin soon!

Students will be able to register for a class either by:

- Filling out the sign-up sheet in your ESOL classroom
- Filling out and submitting the Google Registration form: <https://forms.gle/Pk1pxUzgFgLFhQVv6>



Please remember: Good attendance is important in the citizenship classes.

New citizenship classes will start as follows:

<u>In-person (10 weeks)</u>	<u>Remote (9 weeks)</u>	
Thursday, February 2 nd 9:30 am-11:00 am	Tuesday, February 7 th 6:30 pm- 8:00 pm	Wednesday, February 8 th 7:15 pm – 8:45 pm

PARTNERS AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

MASSHIRE CAREER CENTER OF LOWELL



PHARMACY TECHNICIAN

- February 14, 2023 to May 4, 2023
- Tuesdays & Thursdays
- 6:00 pm - 8:30 pm

Are you interested?
 Call Caitlyn at 978-805-4731
 or go to:
masshirelowellcc.com/pharmacy



PLUMBING

- March 6, 2023 to May 19, 2023
- Monday to Thursday (on-site), 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.
- Fridays (Virtual), 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.
- Nashoba Valley Technical High School in Westford

*For more info, contact:
 Caitlyn at 978-805-4731
 or go to:
masshirelowellcc.com/plumber*



AUTO TECHNICIAN

March 14, 2023 to May 27, 2023

Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays:
 5 pm to 9 pm

Saturdays: 8 am to 2 pm

20 hours/week including online sessions

If you are interested, please contact
 Caitlyn at 978-805-4731
 or go to
masshirelowellcc.com/auto

Schedule of Abisi Adult Education Advisors Days.

Margie Miller

Wednesday, Thursday, Friday

Cindy Taft

Monday, Wednesday, Friday

Martha McQuaide

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday

COMMUNITY INFORMATION



EXTRA COVID SNAP BENEFITS ENDING

Over 600,000 Massachusetts households have been receiving extra temporary federal SNAP benefits during the COVID-19 national public health emergency since March 2020. The extra COVID SNAP benefits are the difference between your normal benefit amount and the maximum amount for your household size, with a minimum amount of \$95 a month. These benefits are known as SNAP Emergency Allotments. These extra payments have been put on EBT cards at the beginning of each month.

Recent action by the federal government (through the Congressional Consolidated Appropriations Act 2023) ends the extra COVID SNAP benefits as of **February 2023**. This means that households will receive their last extra COVID SNAP payment on March 2, 2023.

You can check your balance and find your normal monthly SNAP benefit amount on DTAConnect.com, the [DTA Connect mobile app](#) or by calling the number on the back of your EBT card (800-997-2555).

REAL ID DEADLINE PUSHED BACK UNTIL 2025

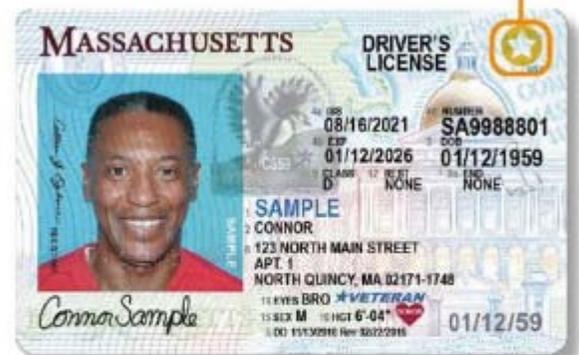
The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has extended the REAL ID full enforcement date from May 3, 2023 to **May 7, 2025**.

Beginning May 7, 2025, every air traveler 18 years of age and older will need a REAL ID compliant driver's license or identification card, or another Transportation Security Administration (TSA) acceptable form of identification, for domestic air travel and to enter certain federal facilities. TSA publishes a list of its acceptable identification documents on its website: <https://www.tsa.gov/real-id>. These credentials can include REAL ID driving license or ID, or a valid U.S. passport.

The Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) is currently serving customers seeking a license renewal, or new license, the opportunity to make an appointment to get a REAL ID compliant license or ID.

REAL ID Massachusetts Driver's License/ID Card

Indicator on card is a star to designate that it is a federally compliant card



- ✘ **CANNOT** be processed online – must make a reservation to visit an RMV Service Center or AAA members can visit a AAA branch if not a first-time applicant
- ✓ Proof of U.S. citizenship or lawful presence required
- ✓ Is a valid driver's license or identification card
- ✓ Is valid for up to 5 years or length of stay in the U.S.
- ✓ **CAN** be used to board a plane in the U.S. or enter federal buildings after May 7, 2025
- ✓ Is an **acceptable** form of identification for federal purposes

CTI—COMMUNITY TEAMWORK

Fuel Assistance (LIHEAP)

LIHEAP, also known as Fuel Assistance, helps eligible households challenged by the high cost of home heating fuel pay a portion of their winter heating bills. Homeowners and renters, including households whose cost of heat is included in the rent, can apply for LIHEAP. Eligibility is based on their household size and the gross annual income of every household member, 18 years of age and older.

- Homeowners and renters are eligible
- Most who get fuel assistance also qualify for other energy assistance programs.

You may use any type of heating fuel (oil, electricity, natural gas, propane, etc.)

CTI Fuel Assistance
45 Kirk Street, 2nd Floor Lowell, MA 01852
Phone: (978) 459 6161
Fax: (978) 458-8594
FuelAssistance@commteam.org

2022-2023 LIHEAP Income Eligibility Chart

Family Size	Maximum Annual Gross Income
1	\$42,411
2	\$55,461
3	\$68,511
4	\$81,561
5	\$94,610
6	\$107,660

FREE TAX PREPARATION HELP IN MASSACHUSETTS

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)

Get Help with Your Taxes and Save!

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program offers free tax help to people who generally make \$60,000 or less, including persons with disabilities, the elderly and limited English speaking taxpayers who need assistance in preparing their own tax returns. IRS-certified volunteers provide free basic income tax return preparation with electronic filing to qualified individuals.

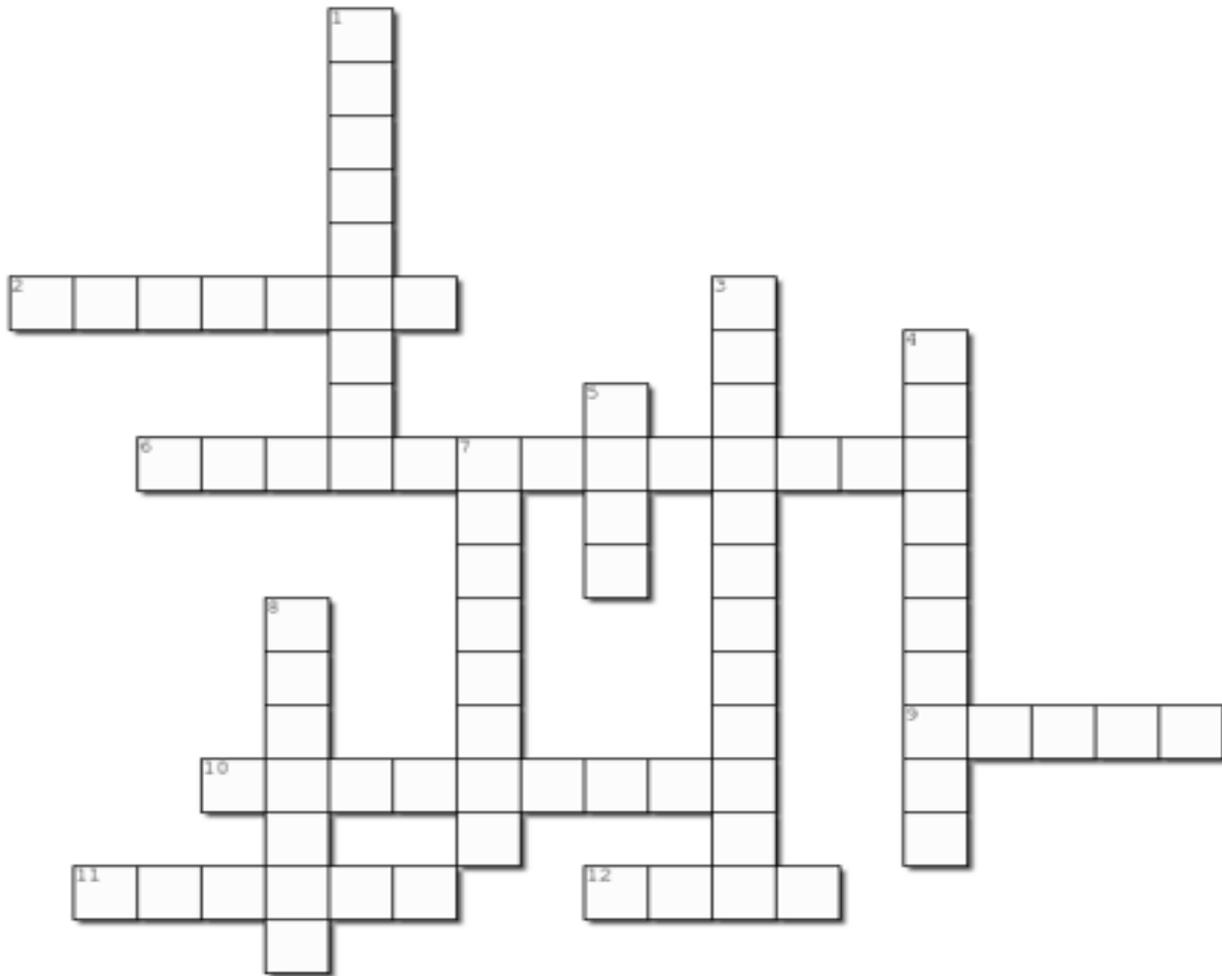
- **Federal Tax Deadline is April 18, 2023.**
- **MA Tax Deadline is April 18, 2023.**



<https://www.commteam.org/program/volunteer-income-tax-assistance-vita/>

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

The Declaration of Independence



Created using the Crossword Maker on TheTeachersCorner.net

Britain July Washington Massachusetts liberty taxes Independence colonists
Jefferson free colonies United

Across

2. from 1775-1783, the 13 colonies fought the Revolutionary War against Great ____
6. one of the 13 original states
9. one reason the colonists fought the British, high ____
10. he wrote the Declaration of Independence, Thomas ____
11. the 13 colonies became a new country called the ____ States of America
12. the Declaration of Independence said that the United States is ____ from Great Britain

Down

1. what the people who lived in the 13 colonies were called
3. the national holiday celebrated on July 4th, ____ Day
4. before he became the 1st U.S. president, he helped the American colonists win the Revolutionary War, George ____
5. the Declaration of Independence was adopted on ____ 4, 1776
7. the flag has 13 stripes because there were 13 original ____
8. the 3 rights in the Declaration of Independence, life, ____, and the pursuit of happiness

School Activities Calendar

January 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	 Conversation Class 9:30 - 11:30 Daisy&Carrie's Class	7
8	9	10	11	12  CBT starting @ 12:30pm	 Conversation Class 9:30 - 11:30 Daisy&Carrie's Class	14
15	16	17	18	19	20 Conversation Class 9:30 - 11:30 Daisy&Carrie's Class  PBT starting @ 5:00pm  CBT starting @ 5:00pm	21  PBT starting @ 8:00am  CBT starting @ 8:00am
22	23	 Reward Center Open	25	 CBT starting @ 12:30pm	 Conversation Class 9:30 - 11:30 Daisy&Carrie's Class	28
29	30	31				