

*Ashland Human Resources Director Welcomes New Employees*  
by Lisa Uglialoro

Can you imagine a year more unique than 2020? For the Town of Ashland, while 2020 meant changing schedules, environments, and ways of getting business done, it brought some exceptional new team members who we are proud to highlight here.

Talia Seavey started this year's "class" over the summer, bringing her skills in communication, health education and wellness outreach to the Decisions at Every Turn program. The Decisions at Every Turn (DAET) Coalition is a Drug Free Communities (DFC) federally funded community coalition with a mission to prevent and reduce youth substance use in Ashland, MA. As Project Coordinator, Talia supports DAET by working with volunteers, youth leaders, and other community stakeholders to implement primary prevention, substance use/misuse education, and behavioral health promotion strategies.

In November, the Town's beloved Ashland Public Library filled its need for a qualified and friendly librarian. Ashland's own Erin Early, was a warmly welcomed addition to the Library staff, defining excellent customer service and efficient effort. Next time you're in the library, make sure to introduce yourself.

Michael Cunningham brought his expertise to the Ashland Police Department as our newest Dispatcher. With years of experience in public safety, communications, and sales, Dispatcher Cunningham is a great addition to the team. He is easy to talk with given his varied background in solar sales and banking, and is grace under pressure when we've had some challenging and complex issues come in.

This school year's challenge of remote learning got our staff's creative juices flowing. This year, "hybrid" students go into school 2 days per week and work remotely from home 3 days per week. Kelly Rund, Recreation Director, rounded up a team to provide a remote learning environment for students who needed guidance during these remote days. Danielle Spinner, Kevin Lewis, and Vara Natarajan answered the call and have kept this great program humming along. Parents in Ashland are thankful for this outstanding service and appreciate all the Remote Learning Assistants have added to the operation.

Another popular and much needed program in town is the Food Pantry. More than ever, it is important to have a team looking out for the nutritional requirements of our residents, and providing food and essentials. Hiring an effective and friendly Food Pantry Coordinator was critical and Meredith Madison aptly filled this need for us.

Ashland's senior community has significantly felt the weight of this pandemic and have turned to the Community Center for opportunities for engagement and programming. As the Activity and Volunteer Coordinator, Ana Vladimirov is already finding ways to reach out to our community and get them involved in the great things happening in the Town of Ashland.

With Winter weather approaching, our DPW crew needed to be fully staffed and Aidan Shepard stepped up to the challenge in January. Aidan had been working out of Berlin and jumped at the chance to be part of the Ashland DPW operations. When he's not clearing away snow, you

can find him helping to maintain Ashland grounds with the Cemetery, Parks, and Trees division crew.

Ashland continues to grow, and we're seeing lots of building, construction, and renovation right now. It's more important than ever to have an experienced Building Commissioner to enforce compliance with zoning and building requirements. Doug Scott gained his expertise working for various towns across Massachusetts, as well as for project based operations with UMass-Amherst and the Wynn Casino. Doug started in late January and has been busy both on the inspection and zoning fronts.

The Town's most recent hire, Justine Grasse, is already active as the Assistant Animal Control Officer helping Dona Walsh manage the demanding realm of animal life in Ashland. From lobsters to cows to our friendly four-legged pets, Justine is excited to help serve our residents, both human and animal.

The Town is lucky to have gained so many talented, educated, experienced, and friendly staff on our team. We welcome them with open arms and look forward to what we can do together.