

Springfield

NEIGHBORS



STANDING TALL:

The Mayo Women

Cover photo by
Terrence Casey

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FINDING PURPOSE AND CONNECTION: THE KEY TO THRIVING AS WE AGE

By Deanna Lowe,
Springfield Crossings
Enhanced Senior Living



As we age, one of the most important factors in maintaining a happy, healthy, and fulfilling life is something simple, yet powerful: staying connected and finding purpose.

At Springfield Crossings, we see every day how meaningful connections and a sense of purpose can truly transform the lives of older adults. While physical health is often the focus, emotional and social well-being play an equally vital role in overall quality of life.

Research continues to show that social engagement is strongly linked to improved well-being in older adults. Staying active in social activities—whether through friendships, group programs, volunteering, or hobbies—can lead to better mental health, increased life satisfaction, and even improved physical health. In fact, studies suggest that older adults who remain socially engaged experience lower rates of depression, stronger cognitive function, and a greater sense of purpose.

However, we also recognize that maintaining these connections can become more challenging over time. Life changes such as retirement, relocation, or the loss of loved ones can sometimes lead to feelings of isolation. This is why creating opportunities for connection is so important—not just within communities like ours, but throughout neighborhoods like Springfield.

Purpose can take many forms. For some, it's participating in a fitness class or social club. For others, it's mentoring, volunteering, or simply sharing stories and experiences with others. Even small, everyday interactions—like enjoying a meal with friends or attending a local event—can have a meaningful impact.

Strong social connections don't just make life more enjoyable—they also contribute to better health outcomes. Studies have found that meaningful relationships can help reduce loneliness, improve mood, and even support better sleep and overall physical health.

At Springfield Crossings, we are committed to fostering an environment where residents feel a true sense of belonging. From engaging activities

to shared experiences, our goal is to create a community where individuals are not only supported, but also inspired to continue growing, connecting, and contributing.

For families and neighbors in Springfield, we encourage you to think about ways to support connection in your own lives and the lives of those around you. A phone call, a visit, or an invitation to spend time together can make all the difference.

Aging is not just about adding years to life—it's about adding life to years. By staying connected and embracing opportunities for purpose, we can all continue to thrive at every stage of life.

Warm regards,

Deanna Lowe
Executive Director, Springfield Crossings

References:
Cambridge University Press & Assessment
Mass General Brigham Health Plan Blog



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COMMUNITY SUBMISSIONS

Have feedback or questions about how to submit story ideas, submissions, event listings or photos? We are happy to hear from you and will do our best to include as much community information as space allows. Deadline for submissions is the 1st of each month. Go to www.bestversionmedia.com and click "submit content." You may also email your thoughts, ideas and photos to terrencecasey@bestversionmedia.com.

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Hello Neighbors!



May arrives with longer days, warmer air, and a reminder that the best things in life tend to be rooted in something deeper than circumstance. With Mother's Day at the center of this month, it felt only right that our cover story celebrate exactly that.

Turn to page 10 and meet Carmela Mayo and her daughters Victoria and Carly – three Springfield women who have built not just businesses here, but a life. Carmela's Dance Studio has anchored the community for 30 years, CFIT Fitness has followed, and if you've watched the Springfield St. Patrick's Day Parade (See coverage of the 2026 parade on Page 13), you may already know Miss Carmela – she's the one on stilts. Their story is one of roots, resilience, and what happens when a mother plants herself somewhere and her children decide to stay.

We also introduce you to Iker Viscioso, a high school exchange student from outside Madrid who spent the year with the Rubbo family in Springfield. His observations about life here – and yes, about Wawa – are a good reminder of what makes this community special when seen through fresh eyes.

Elsewhere, we cover the St. Patrick's Day Parade in photos, and share how the Garden Club of Springfield brought spring to families

at the Ronald McDonald House in Philadelphia. Community briefs highlight the CASA volunteer program, the Italian Cultural Center's call for volunteers, the Master Gardener Plant Sale at Smedley Park on May 9, and Delaware County's search for centenarians ahead of their annual luncheon. A full May calendar and support group listings round out the section.

Our expert contributors bring practical wisdom this month: JDV Electric on outdoor lighting safety, Mikey Shaw Roofing's summer maintenance checklist, Elite Kitchen and Bath Supply on reimagining your space, and a piece on finding purpose and connection as we age – well worth the read.

We're also pleased to welcome our newest advertising sponsor, Top Rail Fence Media, a top-rated fence installation company serving homes, businesses, and farms in the Delaware Valley area. See their ad on page 13.

As always, it is a privilege to put this together for you. Happy Mother's Day.

Terrence Casey

Content Coordinator



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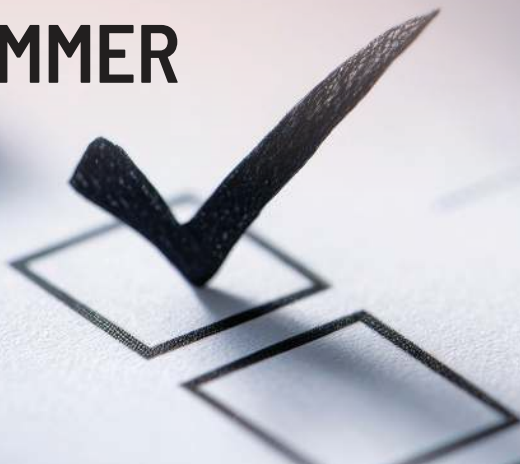
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YOUR ESSENTIAL ROOF MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST FOR SUMMER

By Michael Shaw,
Mikey Shaw Roofing



Summer brings high temperatures, harsh sunlight, heavy rain and strong winds—all of which can strain your roof. Seasonal maintenance is essential for keeping your roofing system performing at its best. Following a roof maintenance checklist for summer helps you identify potential issues early, reduce the risk of leaks and extend the life of your roof.

INSPECT YOUR ROOF THOROUGHLY

Start with a careful roof inspection. Look for cracked, curled, or missing shingles, as well as sagging areas that may signal structural issues. Check the flashing around chimneys, vents, and skylights to ensure it's secure and sealed. Damage in these areas can lead to leaks and water damage inside your home.

CLEAN YOUR GUTTERS AND DOWNSPOUTS

Keep gutters and downspouts clear of debris, especially before summer storms. Clogged gutters can cause water to overflow and damage your roof or home's foundation. Regular cleaning ensures rainwater flows safely away from your house.

TRIM OVERHANGING BRANCHES

Trimming branches near your roof helps prevent gutter clogs and roof damage. Branches that rub against shingles can wear them down and create openings for water or pests. Cutting them back also reduces the risk of storm damage from falling limbs.

CHECK FOR ALGAE AND MOSS GROWTH

Algae and moss thrive in warm, humid conditions and can trap moisture against your roof. Over time, this can lead to rot and deterioration. If you notice growth, treat it promptly with a roof cleaner designed for shingles.

INSPECT AND REPAIR SEALS

Check the seals around vents, chimneys, and skylights for cracks or wear. Damaged seals allow water to seep in, which can lead to insulation damage, mold growth, and costly repairs. Fixing these early helps extend the life of your roof.

LOOK FOR SIGNS OF PESTS

Birds, squirrels, and insects often seek shelter in roofs during summer. Look for nests, droppings, holes, or gnaw marks. Addressing pest activity quickly helps prevent further damage to roofing materials and insulation.

ENSURE PROPER ATTIC VENTILATION

Finally, check that attic vents are clear and working properly. Good ventilation helps regulate temperature and moisture levels, preventing mold, wood rot, and heat damage to shingles. Proper airflow also helps protect your roof and improve overall home comfort.

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OUTDOOR LIGHTING CAN SHINE A LIGHT ON THIS SPRING!

Safety



By Joe Voci,
JDV Electric,
LLC

As winter fades and spring settles in, most homeowners start thinking about freshening up the yard, cleaning up flower beds, and getting outdoor spaces ready for warmer days ahead. Spring is also the perfect time to think about something just as important: electrical safety. With May recognized as Electrical Safety Month, it is the ideal time to prepare your home both inside and out. One area that is often overlooked when it comes to safety, as it relates to electrical, is outdoor systems and landscape lighting.

Landscape lighting does much more than make your home look beautiful after dark. When thoughtfully installed, it improves safety, security, convenience, and functionality while helping homeowners enjoy their outdoor spaces long after the sun goes down. It also serves as a great reminder that every electrical upgrade should be done with safety in mind.

A professionally designed outdoor lighting system can illuminate walkways, driveways, stairs, patios, decks, and entryways, helping reduce the risk of trips and falls. For families, guests, and anyone arriving home after dark, this added visibility can make a major difference. Motion-sensor floodlights that activate when movement is detected adds a valuable layer of security, efficiency, and convenience. These lights are

especially useful around garages, side yards, and back doors and can help deter intruders, eliminate dark hiding spots, and provide peace of mind. Since they only activate when needed, they can help lower utility costs, extend bulb life, and reduce unnecessary energy use and light pollution.

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- **Spotlights** can highlight architectural details, trees, or focal points in the landscape.
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- **Recessed lights** work beautifully on patios, steps, and decks.
- **Sconces and Pendant lighting** add a decorative touch to any space and elevate porches and outdoor living areas with both charm and function.

Electrical Safety Month is also a good reminder to inspect the rest of your home's electrical system. Spring is the right time to test smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, check for overloaded circuits, inspect power cords and extension leads, and evaluate outdoor outlets and wiring for weather damage. Outdoor receptacles should always be properly covered

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and equipped with GFCI protection to help prevent shock hazards. It's also worth considering surge protection, whether through individual surge strips or a professionally installed whole-home surge protector, to safeguard your appliances and electronics year-round.

At JDV Electric, we believe outdoor lighting should do more than enhance curb appeal. It should make your home safer, more efficient, and easier

to enjoy. For over 20 years, homeowners throughout Delaware County have trusted our team to provide expertly designed landscape lighting and dependable electrical service with safety, speed, and professionalism at the forefront. This spring, let your home shine for all the right reasons. Celebrate Electrical Safety Month by making smart upgrades that protect your family and brighten your property.

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ELITE KITCHEN AND BATH SUPPLY: HELPING HOMEOWNERS REIMAGINE THEIR SPACE

By Brian Kenyon

There's something special about walking into a home that simply feels right. Maybe it's a kitchen that finally works for a busy family, a bathroom that feels calm and beautiful at the end of a long day, or a space that has been thoughtfully updated to fit the way life is lived today. Springfield homeowners ready to reimagine the possibilities in their homes have a new local destination for creating beautiful, functional spaces. Elite Kitchen and Bath Supply has officially opened its Springfield location and is bringing fresh inspiration — and a full-service approach — to our community, making it easier than ever for families to update their kitchens, bathrooms, and more.

For the team at Elite Kitchen and Bath Supply, Springfield felt like the perfect fit. With so many homeowners investing in renovations and upgrades, they saw an opportunity to bring something valuable to the area: a welcoming, one-stop showroom where customers can find quality products, expert design help, and professional service all in one place.

From the moment someone walks through the door, the goal is to create an experience that feels simple, comfortable, and exciting. Rather than sending homeowners to multiple stores, suppliers, or contractors, the Elite team guides

customers through every step of the process, from the first design consultation to selecting finishes and completing installation. That "one-stop-shop" approach is especially helpful for busy families who want to improve their homes without the stress of managing every detail on their own.

Inside the showroom, customers will find inspiration for today's most popular kitchen and bath styles. Looking ahead, the team is seeing strong interest in clean, modern designs with warm tones, natural materials, and layouts that make everyday life easier. Durable, low-maintenance features like quartz countertops and quality cabinetry remain top choices for homeowners who want both beauty and practicality.

Elite K&B has also become known for creating spaces that feel polished while still working hard for the families who use them every day. Whether it's improving storage, rethinking a layout, or finding smart ways to maximize space in some of Springfield's older homes, their design team focuses on solutions that are both stylish and functional.



As a new member of the Springfield business community, Elite K&B is excited to welcome neighbors into the showroom and help bring their home ideas to life. Current promotions include specials on select cabinetry, vanities, and flooring, as well as free delivery on qualifying orders and complimentary design services.

For homeowners who may be considering a remodel but aren't quite sure where to begin, the team encourages stopping by the showroom for a conversation. Even a simple consultation can help spark ideas and give homeowners a better understanding of what's possible for their space, budget, and timeline. It's a great time to visit and explore, and let Elite Kitchen and Bath Supply help you on this journey. Sometimes, the best rooms in a home aren't just renovated, they're reimaged for the life happening inside them.

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516 Beatty Rd	4174	4	3/0	13	\$795,000	\$745,000	03/06/26
111 S Forest Rd	1112	3	1/0	21	\$380,000	\$350,000	03/06/26
332 Franklin Ave	1933	5	3/1	58	\$745,000	\$725,000	03/13/26
1433 Country Club Dr	2404	2	2/1	105	\$499,900	\$499,900	03/19/26
978 Westfield Rd	1422	3	1/0	5	\$299,900	\$335,500	03/20/26
227 E Leamy Ave	1980	4	2	4	\$415,000	\$420,000	03/23/26
1299 Country Club Dr	1326	2	2/1	2	\$549,900	\$625,000	03/23/26
412 N Rolling Rd	3048	5	2/1	13	\$649,000	\$667,000	03/26/26
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STANDING TALL: *The Mayo Women*

By Terrence Casey

Photos provided by Carly Mayo Deichman

There is a moment that happens regularly in local grocery stores, coffee shops, and restaurants. A woman with a warm smile walks in, and strangers become not-so-strangers. Current dance students and graduates from decades past light up. They cross the room. They want to introduce themselves to her daughters, share a story about the time Miss Carmela remembered their names years after they stopped taking classes, or simply say thank you.

"Our curly hair is a dead giveaway," laughs Victoria Mayo. "You can't really miss all three of our curls when we're together."

For Carmela Mayo and her daughters, Victoria and Carly, that "Hallmark moment" — as Victoria calls it — happens all the time. And it makes perfect sense. For 40 years, the Mayo family has been woven into the fabric of Springfield in a way that few families are. Carmela built a dance studio here. Her daughters grew up, moved away, and came back to build a fitness business here. And together, the three of them show up — for their students, their clients, their community, and each other — every single day.

It started, as so many Springfield stories do, with a decision to put down roots.



Carmela and her then-husband moved their family from New York City to Springfield 40 years ago, expecting their second child and wanting to be closer to family in Drexel Hill and Springfield. What they found was more than proximity to relatives. They found a village.

"St. Francis of Assisi and our family became the village that was needed to raise my three children," Carmela says. "My children felt safe and cared for in every aspect of their lives. We became rooted here for life."

Her daughter Carly, who spent eight years in New York City pursuing an acting career, always knew she would return. When she met her husband, Andrew, in the city, it was understood early on that Springfield was in the future.

"I had such a great childhood here that it's the only place I wanted to be with my family," Carly says. "We call it the bubble. Springfield is a special place that way."

Victoria echoes the sentiment with the particular clarity of someone who left and came back by choice. "These are streets we learned to ride bikes on, parking lots we learned to drive in, Wawas that know us by name," she says. "Springfield is a place we moved away from in our early 20s to

expand our horizons and the hometown that brought us back to continue to plant roots."

Today, the three women run both Carmela's Dance Studio and CFIT Fitness – seven days a week, together. Their days begin before 5 a.m. with coffee and a flurry of texts about class schedules and business logistics, and rarely wind down before 9:30 at night. Victoria teaches fitness classes and works with personal training clients throughout the day. Carmela, at 72, still carries a full load of dance classes weekly while also handling school pickups for Carly's three children – Melody, 11, Louis, 9, and Dean, 6. Carly moves between both businesses, teaching and managing, with her husband serving as what the family laughingly calls their "unofficial and unpaid CEO."

"In short," Carly says, "it all overlaps."

What doesn't get lost in the overlap is community. One of the family's most beloved traditions is the Springfield St. Patrick's Day Parade – and their most memorable parade moment came not during a grand procession, but a quiet one. During the Covid years, when the parade was canceled two years running, Carmela lobbied the township for a workaround: a small loop around the library and township building so her dance students wouldn't miss another year. They said yes. Carmela strapped on her stilts – she has been stiltwalking for 36 years, once the only female stiltwalker in Philadelphia – and led hundreds of girls around the loop four times.

"For some, it was their first parade," Carly recalls. "Hundreds of people came out to watch, and while it wasn't the massive parade we were used to, it was a glimmer of normalcy in a time that was uncertain for a lot of people."

That instinct – to show up, to find a way, to bring people together – is the throughline of the Mayo family story. Carmela built something from a dream and a community willing to support it. Her daughters watched, learned, and followed.

"She paved the way," Victoria says simply. "She taught us that a smile and lending an ear go a long way in this world."

Springfield, it seems, has been listening all along.



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Editor's Note: Springfield Neighbors always welcomes community news submissions. Share your school events, neighborhood updates, and standout moments by emailing terrencecasey@bestversionmedia.com.

CAN YOU IDENTIFY THIS LITTLE LIBRARY?

Congratulations to Kelly Comly for successfully identifying the March Little Library.

Each month, Springfield Neighbors features a photo of a different Little Free Library hidden somewhere in our township. These charming book-sharing boxes are popping up in front yards, near parks, and along quiet streets, and we want you to find them!

Take a close look at this month's photo. Do you recognize the setting? If you think you know where this Little Library lives, email your guess to terrencecasey@bestversionmedia.com.

The first correct response will win next month's Springfield Swag Bag (est. value \$75), packed with goodies from local sponsors. Special Thanks to Rich from **Moonshine Philly** for a \$50 gift card.

This contest is not sponsored by or endorsed by Best Version Media in any way.



Photos by Terrence Casey

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED AT THE ITALIAN CULTURAL CENTER

The Italian Cultural Center of the Delaware Valley, housed in the historic Lazaretto Building on the Tinicum Township waterfront, is seeking volunteers for summer visiting hours. Volunteers are needed on the first and third Tuesdays from 2 to 4 p.m. and the first and third Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. To learn more, email President Maura Febbo at maurafebbo@gmail.com.

BE A CHAMPION FOR A CHILD IN NEED

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Delaware County is looking for community volunteers to advocate for children and youth in the child welfare system. CASA volunteers connect directly with kids to champion their access to resources, stability, and supportive relationships with caring adults. To learn more or register for an information session, visit delcocasa.org, email amccarron@delcocasa.org, or call 610-565-2208.

MASTER GARDENER PLANT SALE COMING TO SMEDLEY PARK

Submitted by Chris Student

The Penn State Extension Master Gardeners of Delaware County will hold their Good Gardening Saturday Plant Sale on May 9 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Smedley Park, 20 Paper Mill Road, Springfield. The sale features native and other perennials, small shrubs and trees, specialty annuals, and heirloom vegetables at competitive prices. Master Gardeners will be on hand to answer questions, and the event includes educational displays and a Kids Korner activity area. This sale is popular and sells out early, so plan to arrive with time to browse. Shuttle service will be available for parking. As a preview, Master Gardener Todd Johnson will host a \$10 webinar on sensory garden planning on Monday, May 6 – visit extension.psu.edu/good-gardening-saturday-sensory-gardens to register.



Photo provided by Chris Student

CALLING ALL CENTENARIANS

Submitted by Kate Morgan

The Delaware County Office of Services for the Aging (COSA) is looking for residents who are 100 or older – or will reach that milestone in 2026 – to be honored at the 24th Annual Centenarian Luncheon on May 14. Current and long-time Delaware County residents are both eligible. To nominate yourself or someone you know, contact COSA Administrative Officer Kate Morgan at morgank@co.delaware.pa.us or 610-477-3032.

SUPPORT GROUPS FOR ADDICTION & RECOVERY

Several free support groups meet regularly in the area for those dealing with addiction or affected by a loved one's struggle.

Food Addicts in Recovery Anonymous (FA) meets Wednesdays from 1:30 to 3 p.m. at St. Kevin's Parish, 200 W. Sproul Road, Springfield. The program – based on the Twelve Steps of AA – supports women, men, and teens dealing with food obsession, overeating, bulimia, or under-eating. All are welcome, including those concerned about a loved one. Call Joanne at 484-848-6301 or visit foodaddicts.org.

Al-Anon and Alateen meet Fridays at 6:30 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church, 356 Summit Road, Springfield, for anyone affected by a loved one's drinking. Parking is available in the rear; the building is handicapped accessible. Visit AISDV.org or call 215-222-5244 for more information or to find additional meetings.

Nar-Anon Family Group: Courage to Live meets Wednesdays at 10 a.m. at Brookhaven Municipal Center, 2 Cambridge Road, Brookhaven, for those affected by a loved one's addiction. The meeting is wheelchair accessible.

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PICTURE THIS: THE SPRINGFIELD ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE



Article and photos by Terrence Casey

The 106th Springfield Township St. Patrick's Day Parade stepped off under sunny skies on March 14, drawing crowds of green-clad neighbors along its nearly two-mile route from West Springfield Road to Saxer Avenue. Marching bands, dance troupes, mummers, and string bands kept the energy high, with candy for the kids and plenty of community spirit to go around.



This year's Grand Marshal was Thomas J. O'Leary, Jr., owner of O'Leary Funeral Home and a longtime Springfield resident – familiar to readers as our March cover subject – who led the procession past the reviewing stand in front of Old Central School.

For many families, the parade is an annual ritual as reliable as the season itself. And for one afternoon every March, as more than a few parade-goers noted, everyone in Springfield is Irish.



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May 1-16
Lobby Hero
 A gripping drama about loyalty, truth, and justice. Runtime: 2 hours 25 minutes. Check website for showtimes and ticket prices.
 @Players Club of Swarthmore
 Details: pcstheater.org

May 1-24
9 to 5
 Dolly Parton's hit musical about three coworkers who plot revenge on their insufferable boss. Check website for showtimes and ticket prices.
 @The Media Theatre
 Details: mediatheatre.org

IMPORTANT DATES

- Friday, May 1**
May Day
- Tuesday, May 5**
Cinco de Mayo
- Sunday, May 10**
Mother's Day
- Friday, May 15**
National Peace Officers Memorial Day
- Monday, May 18**
Armed Forces Day
- Monday, May 25**
Memorial Day

May 6
Ani DiFranco w/ Special Guest Valerie June – Spirit of Love Tour
 A WXPX Welcomes event.
 Time: 7:30 p.m.
 @Lansdowne Theater
 Details: thelansdownetheater.com

May 6
PAWS for People – Read to Riley!
 Read to Riley, a certified pet therapy dog, in 10-minute sessions. Registration required.
 Time: 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.
 @Springfield Township Library
 Details: delcolibraries.libcal.com

May 6-7
Delco Gives
 Third Annual Delco Gives
 Visit www.Delcofoundation.org for event details and time.

May 7
George & Martha Washington: A Love Story
 Historical presenters explore the real romance behind America's first couple.
 Time: 1:30 p.m.
 @Neumann University
 Cost: \$10
 Details: america250padelco.org

May 7
Legacy Arts Chester Art Auction
 Art auction benefiting youth programs in Chester, themed around the idea of "home."
 Time: 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.
 @Tyler Arboretum
 Details: america250padelco.org

May 8
The Wailers – 50 Years of Positive Vibrations
 Classic reggae anthems celebrating 50 years of Rastaman Vibration.
 Time: 8:00 p.m.
 @Lansdowne Theater
 Cost: See website for ticket prices
 Details: thelansdownetheater.com

May 9-24
The Lion King Jr.
 A by-kids, for-kids Youth Series production of the Disney classic.
 Time: 11:00 a.m.
 @The Media Theatre, 104 East State Street, Media
 Cost: See website for ticket prices
 Details: mediatheatre.org

May 9
Good Gardening Saturday Plant Sale
 Native perennials, shrubs, annuals, and heirloom vegetables; Master Gardeners on hand. Sells out early.
 Time: 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
 @Smedley Park
 Details: extension.psu.edu

May 11
Primary Ideas: An AI Prompting Workshop
 Learn practical techniques for getting better results from AI tools. Registration required.
 Time: 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.
 @Springfield Township Library
 Details: delcolibraries.libcal.com

May 13
Frozen 2 Movie Special!
 Disney's Frozen 2 for children ages 5+. Parents of ages 5-8 must accompany. Registration required.
 Time: 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.
 @Springfield Township Library
 Details: delcolibraries.libcal.com

May 15
Afternoon Movie: Hamnet
 A 2025 PG-13 drama set in Elizabethan England.
 Time: 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.
 @Springfield Township Library
 Details: delcolibraries.libcal.com

May 16
Start Making Sense & The Ocean Avenue Stompers Horns
 A full-evening Talking Heads tribute with two horn-driven sets.
 Time: Doors 7:00 p.m., Show 8:00 p.m.
 @Lansdowne Theater
 Details: thelansdownetheater.com

May 18
Roles of Women in Ancient Egypt
 Dr. Steve lectures on royal and everyday women in ancient Egyptian society. Registration requested.
 Time: 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.
 @Springfield Township Library
 Details: delcolibraries.libcal.com

May 26
Dracula's Influence in the 21st Century
 Explore Bram Stoker's Dracula and its enduring cultural legacy. Registration required.
 Time: 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.
 @Springfield Township Library
 Details: delcolibraries.libcal.com

May 29-June 13
Big Fish
 A musical based on the Tim Burton film about a father's larger-than-life tall tales. Check website for showtimes
 @Players Club of Swarthmore
 Details: pcstheater.org

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A YEAR IN SPRINGFIELD: AN EXCHANGE STUDENT'S AMERICAN ADVENTURE

By Terrence Casey

When Iker Viscioso arrived in Springfield from his small village outside Madrid last fall, he didn't know what a Wawa was. That changed quickly.

"People kept talking about it and I didn't understand why a store I'd never heard of was so popular," he says. "But after getting there and trying it, it became something essential to my experience — something I'm going to miss for sure."

Iker is spending his school year with host family Anthony and Sharon Rubbo and their son Alexander, who was an only child before his Spanish housemate arrived. "We became a family of four," Sharon says. "He fit into our family very well."


For Iker, Springfield felt familiar in the best way — walkable, close-knit,

and full of welcoming people, much like home. The biggest adjustment wasn't the language or the culture, but the classroom. Spanish schools are considerably more demanding, he says, with essay-heavy exams, no Chromebooks, and teachers rotating between classrooms rather than students.

On the courts, Iker has thrived. A longtime tennis player, he earned the number two singles spot on the Springfield High School team, and also swam competitively in the winter season.

As his year winds down, it's the people he'll miss most — along with a certain convenience store. Sharon's advice to any family considering hosting? "Go for it. There are so many lessons you'll learn about yourself, others, and your own family."







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