

State begins to lift COVID-19 restrictions

BY KEVIN FLANDERS
STAFF WRITER

REGION – In a major step toward reaching a new normal across the state, officials recently announced the imminent lifting of COVID-19 restrictions.

Last week, the Baker-Polito Administration announced that most remaining COVID-19 restrictions will be lifted on May 29. With the Commonwealth on track to meet its goal of fully vaccinating 4.1 million residents by the first week of June, officials are confident that restrictions can be safely lifted.

The Commonwealth's face-covering order will also be rescinded for most locations on May 29. The Department of Public Health will issue a new face-covering advisory consistent with the Centers for Disease Control's updated guidance.

Face coverings will still be mandatory for all individuals on public and private transportation systems (including rideshares, livery, taxis, ferries, MBTA, commuter rail, and transportation stations). Masks will also still be required

in healthcare facilities and in other settings hosting vulnerable populations, such as congregate care settings. Face coverings will also be required indoors for staff and students of K-12 schools and early education providers.

Gov. Charlie Baker expects to end the state of emergency across the Commonwealth on June 15.

"The administration is able to take these steps to reopen the Commonwealth's economy because Massachusetts is on track to meet the goal set in December to fully vaccinate over four million individuals by the first week of June," said Baker. "The Commonwealth leads the nation in vaccinating residents, with 75 percent of adults receiving at least one dose."

To date, more than four million residents have received at least one dose of the vaccine, with 3.2 million people fully vaccinated.

New cases of the virus have dropped by 89 percent since Jan. 8. Additionally, COVID-19 hospitalizations are down 88 percent since Jan. 1.

With the statistics continuing to trend

positively and vaccinations rising, residents are looking forward to getting back to work and play far sooner than originally anticipated. Effective May 29, all industries will be permitted to open statewide.

With the exception of the remaining face-covering requirements, all industry restrictions will be lifted on May 29. Capacity for all industries will increase to 100 percent, and the gathering limit will be rescinded.

"All industries will be encouraged to follow CDC guidance for cleaning and hygiene protocols," Baker said.

Eligible residents who haven't been vaccinated are encouraged to schedule their appointments to help prevent the virus from lingering into the summer. Statewide, there are more than 975 locations for Massachusetts residents to access vaccines without delay.

Non-vaccinated individuals are advised to continue wearing face masks and to continue distancing in most settings.

To learn more about the latest guidance and state regulations, visit www.mass.gov.

Resilience of QCC's Class of 2021 celebrated at Commencement ceremony

WORCESTER — On May 21, Quinsigamond Community College conferred 1,441 degrees and certificates to 1,332 graduates as it celebrated its 56th graduating class. QCC hosted its virtual commencement ceremony amidst a backdrop of powerful and motivational speakers who reminded graduates how far they have come, how resilient they are, and the bright future that awaits them.

QCC President Luis G. Pedraja, Ph.D. described the sense of pride he felt witnessing the graduates attain their dreams of a college education, and encouraged them to never stop striving for a better future.

"I never cease to be amazed by our students—your strength, determination, and perseverance. Be proud of your accomplishments. Many of you juggle work and family responsibilities, while continuing to pursue your dream of a college education. You are veterans, single parents, working adults, or the first in your family to go to college. And if all of the challenges you face each day aren't enough, you completed your degree during a pandemic and some of the most turbulent times we've faced as a nation," he said. "Each and every one of you is living history, but more importantly, you are making history!"

Commencement Speaker Maya Rockeymoore-Cummings, Ph.D., a nationally recognized social justice advocate and scholar, told the graduates that the obstacles they have faced and overcome would help them throughout their lives.

"You know how to persevere in life. There is a word for this toughness and it's called resilience, and you've got it. And you should know that you can draw on that resilience for the rest of your life because there are going to be challenges ahead," Dr. Rockeymoore-Cummings said, addressing the biases that student will face even in academia.

"We know that people hold stereotypes about certain people based on categories. They just assume that they know who the person is and they make those assumptions not based on full knowledge of the person, but based on a stereotype or a category," she said. "You determine your success, and you will be successful in spite of those kinds of people. Why, because Quinsigamond Community College has prepared you."

Dr. Rockeymoore-Cummings told the graduates that because of their QCC education they are able to achieve anything that they can envision.

"Quinsigamond has given you the

tools, resources, and a platform to learn. Whatever comes next, you can be sure that you are prepared. You have what it takes to further your education or go out and earn, so that your knowledge, compassion, and insight can be shared," she said.

QCC Student Government President and Student Speaker Armela Xhidole told her classmates to keep feeding their minds with knowledge in order to continue to grow and prosper.

"Learning should be a constant operation, and learning is the fundamental prerequisite for progress in any area. After college, education should not stop. Take part in a career that helps to develop your personality and skills," she said. "Remember, you can achieve everything you want in life with hard work and perseverance. Life is constantly changing, and you must continue to evolve to become a better version of you."

Carlos E. Santiago, Ph.D., commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education said that after the last year's unique challenges, these graduates are now considered pioneers in the higher education landscape.

"While you were learning, we were learning from you in ways that will shape the college experience in the future. Teaching and learning will never be the same. We saw black and brown students who were disproportionately affected by COVID-19; many did not return to school last fall because they had to prioritize family income and family health needs first," he said.

"In an economy like ours we need college educated students to fill the jobs needed to keep the state moving forward. This is why I am grateful to each and every one of you for earning your degrees. No matter what your major is, your skills and talents will help Massachusetts rebuild its economy and move past this pandemic," Commissioner Santiago continued. "Even though I don't know you personally, I know how resilient you are because I know what it took for you to overcome the challenges of this last year in order to earn your degree. Now that same set of skills will help you in writing your next chapter."

President Pedraja told the graduates to draw strength from commencement day whenever they experience hardships in life.

"...know that you can carry on, know that there is nothing you cannot accomplish, and know that in the worst of times you've proven yourselves and

succeeded," he said.

"Remember graduates of the Class of 2021, that you are enough, and remember that Quinsigamond Community College produces productive professionals. So, you go out and you get your future. It's ready for you, and you are ready for it," Dr. Rockeymoore-Cummings said.

To view QCC Commencement Ceremony visit, www.QCC.edu/commencement-2021.

For more information about QCC, contact Josh Martin, Director of Institutional Communications at 508-854-7513 or jmartin@qcc.mass.edu.



ACCURACY WATCH

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Confirmed fact errors will be corrected at the top right hand corner of page 3 in a timely manner.

If you find a mistake, email news@stonebridgepress.news or call (508) 909-4106 during normal business hours. During non-business hours, leave a message in the editor's voice mailbox. The editor will return your phone call.

REAL ESTATE TRANSACTIONS

CHARLTON

\$561,000, 97 Osgood Rd, Real Est Alternatives Inc, to Hughes, Brian J, and Hughes, Christine.

\$550,000, 5 Ashley Rd, English, Brian J, and English, Jacqueline, to Buckley, Elise M, and Buckley, Thomas M.

\$499,900, 41 Davidson Rd, Sleepy Hollow Estates Inc, to Leavitt, Richard, and Leavitt, Gail.

\$420,000, 71 Old Worcester Rd, Creelman, Jesse D, and Pizarro, Rachel V, to Kelly, Adam D, and Kelly, Olivia.

\$370,000, 23 Stephens Dr, Jones, Jason, and Jones, Heather, to Toscano, Mario, and Toscano, Donna.

\$345,000, 45 Bay Path Rd, Singh, Trevis J, to Hoogasian-Gamble, C V, and Gamble, Benjamin R.

\$280,000, 62 Southbridge Rd, E R& Florence L Ashe IRT, and Jewell, Sharon, to Blanchard, Steven A.

\$275,000, 14 Lincoln Point Rd, Daoust, Kevin M, and Spencer-Daoust, Jeanne M, to Clough, Joshua D.



OPEN

Tuesday/Wednesday 8am-2pm

Thursday/Friday 8am-8pm

Saturday and Sunday 7am-2pm

(BREAKFAST ALL DAY)

NOW OPEN!

220 AIRPORT ACCESS ROAD, SOUTHBRIDGE

OPEN BREAKFAST AND LUNCH

DINNER THURSDAY & FRIDAY TIL 8PM

Friday's Child



Emily and Joanna
Age 12 and 14
Registration # 6414 and 6415

Hi! Our names are Emily and Joanna and we want to be adopted together!

Emily and Joanna are friendly and sweet sisters of Caucasian descent who are looking to be adopted together. Emily is a kind, humorous, sweet, and helpful girl. She enjoys drawing and painting, helping her foster parents around the house, and swimming. She likes lip gloss, nail polish, and "pink everything." Emily's foster family enjoys shopping, watching movies, and getting their nails painted with her. Emily plans on going to college after graduating from high school.

Joanna is described as outgoing, expressive, helpful and feisty. She is quite talkative and likes to engage with others. Joanna loves to sing, dance, color, work on arts & crafts projects, and do gymnastics. When she grows up, Joanna would like to be a famous actress.

Legally freed for adoption, Joanna and Emily would thrive in a supportive and committed two-parent family or with a single-parent who has a strong support system. An ideal family will have no other children or have children older than the girls. A family must be comfortable obtaining supportive services and resources in the community for the girls, and should be open to maintaining contact with the girls' biological brother.

Who Can Adopt?

Can you provide the guidance, love and stability that a child needs? If you're at least 18 years old, have a stable source of income, and room in your heart, you may be a perfect match to adopt a waiting child. Adoptive parents can be single, married, or partnered; experienced or not; renters or homeowners; LGBTQ singles and couples.

The process to adopt a child from foster care requires training, interviews, and home visits to determine if adoption is right for you, and if so, to help connect you with a child or sibling group that your family will be a good match for.

To learn more about adoption from foster care, call the Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE) at 617-964-6273 or visit www.mareinc.org. The sooner you call, the sooner a waiting child will have a permanent place to call home.

Jacob White of Charlton receives award from Nichols College

DUDLEY — Jacob White of Charlton receives the award for Outstanding Achievement in Liberal Studies for English at the Nichols College class of 2021 commencement ceremony held on May 15.

About Nichols College

Nichols College is a college of choice for business and leadership education as a result of its distinctive career-focused and leadership-based approaches to learning, both in and out of the classroom, and through impactful research

and professional education. Students thrive in a learning and living environment that is supported by an experiential business curriculum and a strong liberal arts foundation aimed at transforming them into tomorrow's leaders. Nichols also offers master's degrees in business, leadership, accounting, and counterterrorism, as well as a range of certificate programs, to promote career advancement for today's professionals.

