



WELCOME TO THE  
**CHOOSE FRAMINGHAM NEWSLETTER**



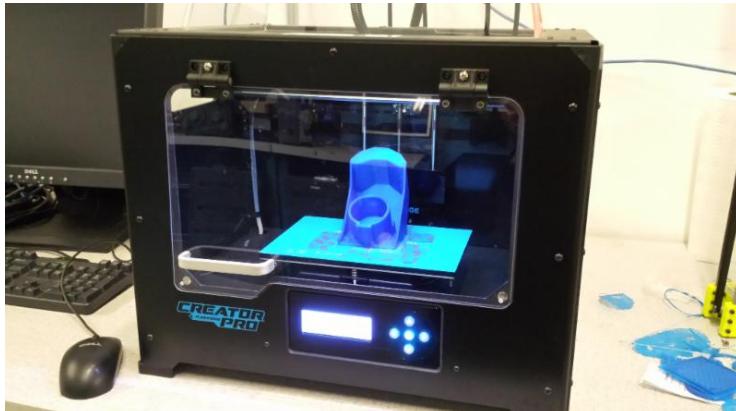
**Choose Framingham Newsletter**  
**March 31, 2017 - In This Issue:**

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**Boston Marathon:  
Options for Athletics  
in Framingham**

The Boston Marathon is only a couple of weeks away! If that has you feeling inspired to start running or working out in whatever form interests you most, Framingham has

**Meet Courtney Thraen, Framingham  
Downtown Renaissance's New  
Executive Director**

*Choose Framingham* caught up with Courtney Thraen, *Framingham Downtown Renaissance*'s new executive director, to talk about why she's excited about growth in Framingham's Downtown. For more information on the organization's work, please visit their website at [www.fdrms.org](http://www.fdrms.org).

got you covered. You don't have to go far - or even leave Framingham - to have access to all the apparel, equipment, and gyms you need.

Take a look at the stores right here in Framingham, below.

**Anytime Fitness**

19 Temple St  
Framingham, MA 01702  
(508) 405-1300

**Bancroft Boxing**

701 Waverly Street  
Framingham, MA 01702  
(508) 658-2box

**Bob's Stores Footwear & Apparel**

Shoppers World, 1 Worcester Rd  
Framingham, MA 01701  
(508) 628-5505

**Crossfit Framingham**

280 Worcester Road  
Framingham, MA 01702  
(508) 626-2000

**Evolve Fitness**

2 California Avenue  
Framingham, MA 01701  
(508) 879-6200

**Extreme Fitness**

875b Waverly Street  
Framingham, MA 01702  
(508) 656-0875

**Gym Source**

30 Worcester Rd.  
Framingham, MA 01702  
(508) 416-6487

**Lifetime Fitness**

490 Old Connecticut Path  
Framingham, MA 01701  
(774) 777-2100

**Metrowest YMCA**

280 Old Connecticut Path  
Framingham, MA 01701  
(508) 879-4420

**Precision Fitness Equipment**

303 Worcester Rd,  
Framingham, MA 01701  
(508) 861-7860

**Red Factory**

280 Worcester Rd #102  
Framingham, MA 01702  
(508) 820-8308



**What is Framingham Downtown Renaissance (FDR)?**

FDR is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that drives community and economic development in Downtown Framingham's transit-oriented development zone. FDR seeks to demonstrate revitalization on many levels, from building social capital to improving public health to ensuring new businesses

have the tools to thrive. FDR is comprised of one executive director and 15 board members. It operates largely from grants, specifically a Community Development Block Grant. Volunteers and interns help implement and sustain FDR's overall mission.

**What's your role in FDR?**

As Executive Director, I spearhead initiatives, both short- and long-term, to revitalize Downtown Framingham. Some initiatives focus solely on business growth, while other initiatives focus on creating a transit-oriented development landscape that supports all tenets of a healthy, well-rounded lifestyle. I interface directly with both business owners and building owners to discuss specific enhancement and growth strategies in this mixed-use zoning area.

**What goals do you hope to achieve for downtown Framingham?**

I want to build FDR's capacity so that we can successfully execute an engagement and outreach strategy that reaches a large cross-section of people, focused not only on those who live within a one-mile radius of the Framingham MBTA Commuter Rail Station, but also on those who live in the Greater Boston region and Worcester. Through this strategy, people will realize the great walkability of Downtown Framingham. This engagement strategy will demonstrate the great safety and comfort provided in simply being downtown and surrounded by such a diverse group of hard-working, welcoming people. People can appreciate the myriad services provided downtown, from graphic arts training at MG High Tech to exercising at Core Fitness to experiencing new fashion styles at our boutiques. Last, I want the downtown community to develop camaraderie, which is built upon trust and cross-collaborations. These collaborations are often spear-headed from our arts-centric institutions, including the Fountain Street Fine Arts Gallery and the [Amazing Things Arts Center](#).

**What are the most exciting things about Downtown Framingham right now?**

From a high-level perspective, I've witnessed many new business arrivals or business expansions in the past five months. The area's commercial vacancy rate has decreased. This reflects consumer confidence and business confidence. Building owners have shown me new renderings depicting enhanced façade designs, and restaurant owners are filling each night of the week with social activities.

Specifically, our eclectic restaurant scene is taking off. FDR has

REI

375 Cochituate Rd  
Framingham, MA 01701  
(508) 270-6325

Title Boxing Club

235 Old Connecticut Path  
Framingham, MA 01701  
(508) 861-7300

started hosting quarterly community strolls at downtown restaurants which have really generated a lot of enthusiasm from the entrepreneurial community. From April 17 to 23, Downtown Framingham is having its first-ever restaurant week. On April 23rd, the Springdale Barrel Room will host the inaugural Taste of Downtown Framingham from 3 to 7 pm.

Downtown Framingham must demonstrate a unique sensory experience that you cannot achieve inside a mall or a big-box shopping plaza. To that extent, the music and arts scene is really taking off, and I've noticed more cross-collaborations between musicians, artists, and traditional businesses. For the Six Mile Moment and Mural Mile Road Race, we are ready to show everyone the great flavor and energy that Downtown Framingham can exude, imprinting a positive sensory experience that will sustain business growth and expand social interactions. It's great to see restaurants like Deluxe Depot Diner and Danny Sullivan's cultivating the live band scene here, as well. Danny Sullivan's has bands booked through October, so that business model is working very well in the historic Irving Square.

**Tell us about some of your favorite things to do in Downtown Framingham?**

As executive director, I really get to know everyone in Downtown Framingham, from faith-based leaders to business leaders and residents. I really love to relax in the restaurants downtown. Pueblito Paisa is such a vibrant place that immediately lifts your spirits, while Frescafe provides a calming, minimalist feel that supports relaxation. The Deluxe Depot Diner brings its own fun charm, while Taqueria Mexico, Mi Cocina, and El Mariachi really pour on the vibrancy. The first time I walked into Pho Dakao, I was blown away by the interior design and the quality of food, and that initial impact creates life-long customers. It's great to see our destination locations like Jack's Abby, Springdale Barrel Room, and Exhibit 'A' Brewing Company doing so well, too. Each business has its own unique model that has taken off and captured the heart of the MetroWest and even Greater Boston.

The fashion and beauty scene in Downtown Framingham is really expansive. It's fun to check out clothes at our fashion boutiques, including Hypnotik Clothing, Miss Chic, and Atos Boutique. Physical fitness and cycling are a huge element that underscores the needs of the growing car-free population, with N+1 Cyclery and 1854 Cycling Company leading the way. These two businesses really demonstrate their local brand in a memorable way that everyone can connect with.

**What do you think people would be surprised to learn about Framingham?**

Downtown Framingham offers small-town charm in a walkable, urban setting, where everyone really is welcome. The area's diversity is refreshing and motivating, as it places value on each person and underscores the importance of non-conformity. Great business ventures and artists thrive on taking risks in Downtown Framingham's diverse setting. Downtown Framingham's proximity to the MetroWest Medical Center and Framingham State University supports the area's foothold as a talent generator, which is a necessary element for a thriving area.

Some urban areas can seem socially cold, but the warm nature of the populations in Downtown Framingham smashes that stereotype. The hard-working immigrant community exudes a strong zest for life, and their communal, social nature is really a great boon for Downtown Framingham's social economy. Additionally, it's so great to see how the immigrant and lifelong Framingham populations work incredibly well side-by-side to reach shared goals of improved social discourse and individual career goals.

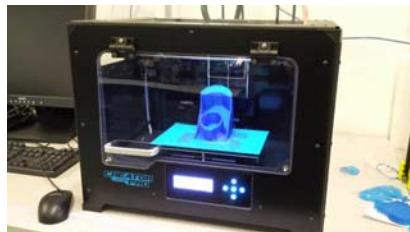
**Tell us a little more about your background.**

I grew up in Illinois, and I have studied at Ohio State University, UMass Dartmouth, and Boston University. I have degrees in journalism and public policy, and I'm wrapping up my Master's degree in city planning. I served in the U.S. Navy for 7 years, working as a navigator on a guided-missile destroyer and teaching courses at the Massachusetts Maritime Academy. I moved to Framingham in 2015, and I was lured by the town's massive economic activity and aggressive policy goals for transit-oriented development.

**Any last thoughts you'd like to share?**

I encourage everyone to get a fresh, current look at Downtown Framingham and reassess any previous perspectives or notions. The area is moving along a positive trajectory that offers personable, walkable charm that you cannot experience in other parts of Framingham. This was evidenced on our last community stroll, called the Shamrock Stroll. To stay abreast of Downtown Framingham's path, please like the [Framingham Downtown Renaissance](#) and [Downtown Diaries](#) pages on Facebook, and please follow us on Twitter ([@FDR\\_MainSt](#)). We are grateful to those who are already so passionate about Downtown Framingham!

## Framingham Makerspace Opens New Space in Saxonville



Framingham Makerspace 3D Printer

Looking for a place where you can turn your idea for a new gadget or your artistic vision for your next musical festival into a reality? [Framingham Makerspace](#) allows individuals who are developing their next

cosplay idea for Boston Comic Con or those interested in developing LED-based art work the space - and the tools - to create those works. And over the next few months, they will be opening their new space at the Saxonville Mills complex.

"I really want to see what happens when you get artists and technical people together, see that intersection, what comes out of it," said David Kent, a co-founder of the Makerspace. Kent, a mechanical engineer by training, says that the mission of the nonprofit organization is to bring artists and technicians together

to create a community.

The idea for a makerspace located in Framingham came from a conference that Somerville's Artisan's Asylum held a few years ago, which walked attendees through the process of developing a makerspace. A core group of 10 individuals came together to help create a space in Framingham, and eventually they found a site within Saxonville Mills.

"If you have an idea for a project, you don't want to have to drive 45 minutes to begin working on it," said Kent. Framingham Makerspace has successfully grown to a community of more than 20 members from the surrounding area who are using the space to develop their ideas.

The Makerspace is now moving to a new location in the complex, but is still welcoming new members. The organization has two tiers of membership. At \$100 a month, members have access to the space for 24 hours a day, seven days a week, as well as access to all equipment, including the wood shop, metal and machine shop, and welding equipment on site. At \$30 a month, members can access the site when others are there, and have access to some of the space's equipment.

The Framingham Makerspace is run entirely by its members. The organization will hold a grand opening of its new space in the coming weeks, but in the meantime, if you are interested in learning more, they host weekly tours from 7 to 9 pm on Wednesdays. The address for the new space is:

2 Central Street  
Building 3  
Framingham, MA

You can also contact them at their Website at  
[www.framinghammakerspace.org](http://www.framinghammakerspace.org)

## Business Profile: Fountain Street Fine Art Gallery

[Fountain Street Fine Art Gallery](#), founded in February 2011, is a local, contemporary art gallery in Framingham. The gallery exhibits and sells art work by local, emerging artists as well as mid-career artists. They feature paintings, sculpting, and photography. Working as an artist's collaborative, the gallery works in partnership with affiliated artists to operate and promote the gallery.

Located in an out-of-the way industrial building, Fountain Street is a diamond in the rough. Walking into the building for the first time, guests are always surprised to find a fine art gallery in front of them with one guest once noting, "It's the real thing!"

Each year, the gallery hosts approximately 15 exhibits, with exhibits in the main gallery changing monthly. A smaller gallery or "affordable art shop" sells jewelry and cards and changes artists every few months. And they also display art offsite at the International Fine Art fair at the Cyclorama in Boston. The gallery is one of the few places outside of Boston where visitors can buy exceptional contemporary art by some of the region's

best talent. And they can [shop](#) online now!

The gallery continues working to bring cutting edge artwork to Framingham and the Metrowest. They have exhibits scheduled through 2018. Their latest show, "[Place and Memory](#)," which ends on April 2nd, features nature-inspired paintings and works on paper by Iris Osterman and Kathy Soles, local artists with national reputations. Their work is bold and lush, and comes at the perfect time with spring right around the corner.



[Fountain Street Fine Art Gallery](#) is located in Downtown Framingham.

Framingham EDIC

[chooseframingham@framinghamma.gov](mailto:chooseframingham@framinghamma.gov)

The [Framingham Economic Development and Industrial Corporation \(EDIC\)](#) was established in 1995 to stimulate economic development and expand employment opportunities in the Town of Framingham in accordance with the town's approved economic development plans.

*STAY CONNECTED*

