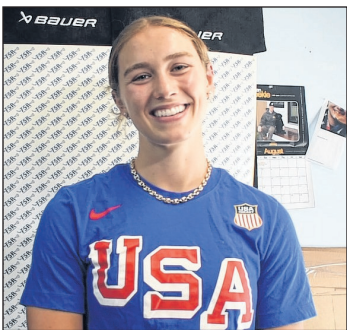




The Eagle-Tribune

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MONDAY, AUGUST 3, 2026 EAGLETRIBUNE.COM \$3.00



Coach Isabella Quadros has a little fun with Oliver Acevedo, 8.

CARL RUSSO/Staff photo

Beyond incredible

How Beyond Soccer transformed a city and its kids

By Bill Burt
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LAWRENCE — If you'd told Stephanie McArdle, back when she was a soccer player at the University of Michigan, that she'd one day be fighting for field space in Lawrence, she might've laughed.

But here she is, more than two decades later, at the heart of a movement that's changed thousands of young lives — and the city itself.

She was nearly 30, drifting between soccer jobs, when she and her mother, Ellen — 60 at the time — with an assist from fellow sister, Lindsay, decided to do something that made sense to them, if not to anyone else.

The McArdles of Boxford saw a need in Lawrence, a city of immigrants where, ironically, there were no high school soccer teams at the time.

"One of the craziest experiences of our lives," Ellen McArdle said, remembering 2007.

"We did everything looking for girls. At one point



IF there is a poster child of Beyond Soccer, it is Esmerelda Hernandez, left, who stands with the organization's founder and executive director, Stephanie McArdle. Hernandez holds up the photo of the first-ever team started for Lawrence girls by McArdle, the Wolves.

we'd drive by schools, asking if they'd like to play. Imagine that happening today. Two white women driving around asking kids if they wanted to play soccer. We'd probably get

arrested."

But Lawrence needed them.

"How does a city of immigrants, most from countries where soccer is everything, not have high school soccer teams?" McArdle wondered. "This is where we need to be. We need to see if we can help."

They started with a girls team. That team grew into a program — Beyond Soccer — with a mission that was never just about the game. For McArdle, soccer was the vehicle, but the destination was something bigger: confidence, community, opportunity.

They weren't alone for long. Local soccer lovers Eric Lundquist and Zoltan Frasz pitched in, running Saturday clinics. Lundquist became their rock, even as O'Neill Field — riddled with glass, sometimes needles — served as their makeshift home.

"Eric did all the dirty work," Ellen McArdle said. "He'd get there early and rake

SEE SOCCER, PAGE 2

Officials OK bills before recess

By Christian M. Wade
» Statehouse Reporter

BOSTON — State lawmakers wrapped up their biennial session Friday by frantically pushing through bills dealing with immigration and child welfare protections, elder and primary care, leaving hundreds of other bills on the table for when they return after the November elections.

On Thursday, the Democratic-controlled House and Senate approved a bill that would bar U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents from pursuing civil arrests at courthouses and ban state and local law enforcement from asking about immigration status, among other provisions.

Backers of the PROTECT Act, which is now on Gov. Healey's desk, say it will restrict the ability of ICE to apprehend immigrants without criminal backgrounds as the Trump administration gears up for another surge of immigration enforcement. For some lawmakers, the issue is personal.

"I'm not just the son of immigrants. I'm an immigrant myself," state Sen. Pavel Payano, a Lawrence Democrat and member of the committee that crafted the final bill, said in remarks earlier this week. "This bill is important to people in my neighborhood, my family and friends, and the people I represent."

If signed by Healey, the bill would codify and expand a 2018 Supreme Judicial Court

SEE RUSH, PAGE 2

Semana Hispana comes to a close

Annual celebration wraps up in Lawrence

By Jonah Frangiosa
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LAWRENCE — Latin flags danced between carnival rides as another successful Semana closed with its grand finale Sunday.

People found the fun and games at Campagnone Common over the weekend as Semana Hispana 2026 wrapped up, ending another year of Lawrence's annual weeklong celebration of Hispanic heritage.

The downtown green became a colorful gathering place filled with music, food, dancing and pride for plenty of nations across the world.

From noon to 10:45 p.m. each day since Friday, the common was brimming with activity as families hopped on rides, tested their luck at games, and stopped to watch dancers and musicians do their thing.

Residents and visitors strolled through the festival grounds with the sounds of

SEE SEMANA, PAGE 3

DERRY

A slice of the action

Pizzastock celebrates its 10th year

By Jonah Frangiosa
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DERRY — What was first intended to be a one-time gathering of rock bands and close ones has stacked the pizza boxes for a decade, becoming one of the town's signature summer events.

Pizzastock took the stage Saturday, celebrating its 10th anniversary beside Pinkerton Academy's football field. Live music, community organizations and local residents shared the green as well as a commitment to supporting mental

SEE PIZZA, PAGE 4



From left, Jordan Tagasky, Maddy Hawkes, James Grady and Rob Ferullo of the band Rite of Passage perform Saturday during the Pizzastock music festival in Derry. The event featured 12 bands with food, field games and dozens of local organizations hosting information booths.

TIM JEAN/Staff photo

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