

# THE MIDDLETOWN PRESS

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Mariana Zakhidna / Contributed photo

**Victoria Zakhidna, left, and her children Daniel, 5, and Elizabeth, 4, escaped the Russian invasion in Ukraine this month. Her husband Andrii, center, stayed in Ukraine.**

## Benefit helps Ukrainian family

Community unites to help refugees Victoria Zakhidna and her children get situated in city

By Adam Hushin

MIDDLETOWN — As a Ukrainian mother and her two preschool-aged children get used to life in Middletown after fleeing Russian attacks, members of the community are coming up with creative ways to provide support.

Victoria Zakhidna, 27, escaped from Ukraine with her children, Daniel, 5, and Elizabeth, 4, and arrived in Middletown on March 8. She is staying with her sister Mariana Zakhidna, who said

“they’re adjusting really well so far.”

They are in the process of finding a local preschool program for the children to enroll in, and are in contact with family and friends who remain in Ukraine, including Victoria Zakhidna’s husband, Andrii, who stayed to fight for their country.

Victoria Zakhidna admitted that the time difference makes communication difficult. All of their family members are OK, but  
*See Benefit on A6*

## War enters fourth week



Rescuers were searching for survivors in the ruins of a theater ripped apart by Russian airstrikes in the besieged city of Mariupol, while ferocious Russian bombardment killed dozens in a northern city over the past day, according to the local governor.

**Nation/World, B8**

## Encouraging alternate modes of transportation

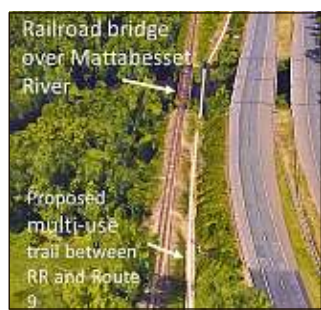
Talks underway for possible trail linking Middletown to Cromwell

By Cassandra Day

MIDDLETOWN — Local outdoor enthusiasts who encourage more people to walk and bike to their destinations are in talks about possibly turning a dirt access road along a mile-long portion of Route 9 into a multi-use trail that would connect to Cromwell.

The project would link up Middletown’s Miller and Bridge street area to Main Street in Cromwell, and also promote the use of public transit, according to John Hall, executive director of the Jonah Center for Earth and Art and member of Middletown’s Complete Streets Committee.

They have been talking about creating a proposed “Middletown-Cromwell Multi-Use Connector Trail” between the highway and railroad tracks to the city’s bike/pedestrian and Lower



Jonah Center for Earth and Art / Contributed photo

**Middletown’s Complete Streets Committee is seeking to create a multi-use trail from Miller Street in Middletown to Cromwell’s riverfront area. It would run parallel to Route 9, between the highway and railroad tracks, as shown above.**

Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments plan, he said.

The area, along the west side of Route 9, is located where the sewer pipeline

*See Trail on A4*



Sarah Kyrzcz / For Hearst Connecticut Media

Above, Tim Brechlin, of Clinton, and Heather Connolly, of Madison, head for the water for a dip with the Shoreline Ice Angels. Below, Maya Bradstreet, of Madison, feels the chill as she gets into the water.

## Bathers make a splash aimed at boosting health

Shoreline group’s members take icy plunge each week

By Sarah Page Kyrzcz

MADISON — Eight minutes. That’s how long Kahseim Outlaw was immersed in the Sound, chest-deep, as the air temperature hovered around 23 degrees and the water was a frosty 37 degrees on a recent Saturday.

Outlaw, 41, was with a group of 24 people, who meet nearly every winter weekend to experience therapeutic cold water immersion at West Wharf Beach by bathing in the frigid water.

“I’m feeling pretty good,” the Middletown resident said, as he stood on the beach, dripping wet.

He said he felt “excited, enthusiastic” as he  
*See Ice on A6*



## State could be headed for remote work train wreck

DAN HAAR

COMMENTARY

Two years after a pandemic-stricken state sent its office employees to work from home, Wednesday brought the full-staff return at the Department of Transportation, one of the largest Connecticut agencies.

It was dubbed the first “All Hands Wednesday,” a weekly event. Hundreds, perhaps more than 1,000 people came together at the DOT headquarters in Newington — planners, designers, inspectors and more — connecting with old friends and colleagues on a sunny, pre-spring day.

Parking lots filled. But the moment also signaled dark clouds of discord as the issue of telework — who can work from home, and how often — hung, for many, over the reunion. Like all state executive branch units, the DOT is now operating under the ruling of an arbitrator who rejected Gov. Ned Lamont’s plan to set caps on how much time unionized employees can spend working remotely.

As the tens of thousands of state employees return to “normal,” how many will request and win telework, for what percentage of their time? No one can say.

The new rules, negotiated under the state’s 2017 labor agreement, give a roadmap that says agencies can require workers to spend at least one day a week in the office. Beyond that, it’s a  
*See Haar on A4*

## UConn men’s basketball team befriends young fan fighting rare form of cancer

By Mike Anthony

BUFFALO — When the most devastating news was delivered by doctors last Tuesday, Mario Jimenez turned to his 15-year-old daughter and said, “What do you want to do, Sweetheart? Where do you want to go?”

Months of chemotherapy and radiation and surgery had eradicated the cancer from Aubrien Jimenez’s head but the first post-treatment MRI indicated that it had spread to her back, her hips, maybe into her bones and liver.



Mario Jimenez / Contributed photo

**Aubrien Jimenez, 15, who is battling cancer, with coach Dan Hurley.**

**MARCH MADNESS**

► For the latest updates, highlights, action from the NCAA tournament, go to: [middletownpress.com](http://middletownpress.com)

This was a very dark time. “I want to see snow,” Aubrien Jimenez said.

So that’s what happened. Three days later, the Jimenez family left their Bradenton, Florida home and flew to New York City, the plan being  
*See Jimenez on A6*

Advice/puzzles.....B6  
Classified/Public notices...B9  
Comics.....B7

Lotteries.....A2  
Nation/World.....B8  
Obituaries.....A4

Opinion.....A9  
Sports.....B1-4  
Television.....B5



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**Weather:** Patchy morning fog; partly sunny.  
High: 75. Low: 47. **Page A10**