



City of Westfield
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



59 Court Street Suite 202
Westfield, MA 01085
413-572-6201
Mayor Michael McCabe

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Media Contact: Amy Tosi
413-572-6201
amy.tosi@cityofwestfield.org

City Hall to Light Up Purple for Lupus Awareness Month

Westfield- Mayor Michael McCabe has proclaimed May as “Lupus Awareness Month” in the city and the façade of City Hall will be lit up with the signature color of purple between May 13-20, in support of those who suffer with this difficult to diagnose disease.

Lupus is a chronic autoimmune disease in which the immune system inexplicably and randomly attacks the body’s own tissue and vital organs. Symptoms range from joint pain, extreme fatigue, hair loss, cognitive issues and physical impairments that can affect every facet of their lives. Although most lupus patients live a normal life span, this mysterious disease can be deadly if not treated in time. While 90% of the 1.5 million Americans living with lupus are women of childbearing age, it can affect men, children, and teenagers as well. There are roughly 16,000 new cases annually.

Lynn Gagnon is a lupus patient, and the founder and facilitator of the Pioneer Valley Lupus Support Group based in West Springfield. She has been advocating for awareness of the disease since 2015 and requested the proclamation of May as Lupus Awareness Month in Westfield.

When she was diagnosed at the age of 48, there was very little information about the disease that had plagued Lynn with a variety of symptoms her entire life. She has made it her mission to educate herself and the public about lupus and overlapping diseases, and to offer the hope and encouragement that can only come from experience.

Lynn is often known to share that hope with the support group “You are not alone.” She says, “There is a world full of chronically ill people who would love you to be a part of their circle, as we chronically ill all like to build up each other's spirits.”

To learn more about lupus, please log on to <https://www.lupus.org> if you are suffering from lupus and are interested to more information about the Pioneer Valley Lupus Support Group, you can email Lynn at lupus.springfieldma@gmail.com, or call (413) 265-8942.