

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

CITY OF LOWELL

In City Council

VOTE

Authorizing the City Manager on Behalf of the City of Lowell, to accept a Gift from the Middlesex District Attorney's Office of a bench as part of their "Let's Connect Benches" program.

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The Middlesex District Attorney's Office desires to donate a bench as part of their "Let's Connect Benches" program; and

The City of Lowell desires to accept the gift of said bench for use in Lowell's outdoor spaces as a way for both older individuals and young adults to connect with one another.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT VOTED:

That the City Manager be and is hereby authorized in the name of the City of Lowell, to accept a gift from the Middlesex District Attorney's Office of a bench as part of their "Let's Connect Benches" program for use in the City's outdoor spaces, pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, §53A.



Sokhary C. Chau  
*Mayor*

Date: June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
To: Thomas Golden Jr., City Manager  
Lowell City Council  
From: Sokhary C. Chau, Mayor  
Re: Request to accept bench donation

The City of Lowell has received an offer for a donation of a bench from Middlesex District Attorney Marian Ryan as part of their “Let’s Connect Benches” program.

I am requesting permission to accept this donation on behalf of the City of Lowell for everyone from the senior citizens to the young adults residing in the city.

Please reference the attached letter for additional details.

Dear Mayor Chau,

As we collectively look to ways to address the epidemic of loneliness and social isolation that persist across every demographic in our country, my office is launching a new initiative -- "Let's Connect Benches" -- and I am hopeful that you might be interested in partnering with us to bring this initiative to Lowell.

After several incredibly challenging years of intense social isolation during the pandemic, the need for additional intervention to address this crisis could not be more clear. We researched what could be most effective, and found that there is compelling research on the benefits of intergenerational programming. Given the reality that the epidemic of loneliness has impacted every possible demographic, and in light of the makeup of Middlesex County, with our 21 colleges and universities and sizable senior population, our hope for our program is to bring these "Let's Connect Benches" to communities as a way for both older individuals and young adults to connect with one another.

I am eager to implement this program across Middlesex County, and hope that by starting with communities that showcase the depth of our diversity across generations -- and particularly in places that have a large college student presence -- we will see the benefits of intergenerational programming in real-time.

As Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy noted in his recent advisory, to address this crisis we need to cultivate a culture of connection: *"Connections are not just influenced by individual interactions, but by the physical elements of a community (parks, libraries, playgrounds) and the programs and policies in place. To strengthen social infrastructure, communities must design environments that promote connection, establish and scale community connection programs, and invest in institutions that bring people together."*

I believe that our "Let's Connect Benches" program can make a difference and look forward to hearing from you on your interest in partnering with us to bring this program to Lowell.

Cordially,  
Marian Ryan