

Cultural Council to distribute historical coloring books

BELCHERTOWN — The Belchertown Cultural Council will be distributing copies of the popular Belchertown Historical Coloring Book to families in April as a gift to the community during these challenging times.

The reprint of this project — which began 25 years ago — is sponsored by the Belchertown Cultural Council. Interested individuals can pick up copies of the coloring book (while supplies last, limit two per household) on the Belchertown Town Common on the following dates: April 10 from 1 to 3 p.m.; April 11 from 9 to 11 a.m.

To meet COVID-19 precautions, masks are required and pickup will be contactless. To receive a copy of the book, please drive up to a BCC volunteer in the Common parking lot. A volunteer will place the items in vehicle's trunks or pass them through the window of a vacant vehicle seat. "I have been involved in many large fundraisers over the past 30 something years but the Belchertown Coloring Book continues to be the one that I am most proud of," said Cheryl Dutton, original creator of the coloring book.

She said the idea occurred to her 25 years ago after the town lost one of historic buildings in the center of town due to a fire.

"One of the results of that fire was that people wanted to learn more about the buildings that once stood there," she said. "I can't even tell you how many PTO meetings I sat through and heard a parent say 'My daughter/son is always asking me about that building...' I remember the very first meeting when I bought together members of the Belchertown PTO and the Belchertown Historical Association. I was a member of both organizations and I have always believed that we can accomplish big things when we do them together."

Dutton said the timing of the release of the coloring book couldn't be better.

"So many parents and children (are) at home looking for safe and fun things to do," said Dutton. "Remote learning, home schooling, hybrid learning, cohorts, Netflix, take-out, good grief what is a parent to do? Color! Coloring makes everything better and learning fascinating bits about where you live while coloring is like winning the daily double. Doing it with your children is priceless. As RuPaul said: 'Life is about using the whole box of crayons.'"

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