



## Good Neighbors: Thayer Academy

Thayer Academy in Braintree has always been a positive force in its community, but in recent years, the school has stepped up its civic involvement.

“We’ve been more intentional in our efforts to be involved in the community at large and in touch with local business owners,” said David Casanave, director of communications at Thayer Academy. “People now see us as more than an academic institution on a hill.”

Thayer’s involvement has taken many forms. Casanave is a member of the Sea Level Exchange, a subgroup of the South Shore Chamber of Commerce, which provides positive networking opportunities with area businesses and community leaders. The academy hosts one of the group’s meetings each year.

In September, Thayer held a candidates’ forum that gave the public the opportunity to hear from Braintree’s mayoral candidates.

According to Casanave, Thayer also recently started a neighborhood newsletter that will be published twice a year for residents in the surrounding blocks. The newsletter is both a way to thank area residents for being good neighbors and a way to inform them about Thayer news and activities.

“The contact and dialog [with the neighbors] is not always happy, but we don’t need to shy away from that,” Casanave said. “We’re not on a large plot of land – we’re right in the middle of the community. We want to make sure we’re acting like that.”

### Student activities

Thayer students and faculty have a commitment to community service that dates back to the academy’s earliest days, when its founder, General Sylvanus Thayer, urged them to give something back to their communities.

Many of the activities are ongoing; others may vary from year to year. Here is a sampling of student and faculty community service projects this year:

At holiday time, the junior class Thanksgiving food drive for local Headstart families brings in enough food to fill at least 60 baskets, as well as about \$1,000 in cash for supermarket gift certificates. Students and faculty also contribute toys for young children through the Holiday Toy Project.

Every May, students from St. Coletta’s Cardinal Cushing Center in Braintree take part in activities on campus that are organized by Thayer students. In the fall, St. Coletta’s students and their Thayer buddies have fun at a Halloween Dance.

## Financial Benefits for the Community

Thayer Academy is a major economic contributor to Braintree and the surrounding area, according to the school’s Community Impact Statement.

- Thayer’s annual payroll and cost of benefits for Braintree residents employed at the academy total more than \$2.2 million.
- Thayer does \$1 million of business every year with 40 Braintree businesses.
- This year 56 Braintree students are attending Thayer, which is saving the city \$481,600. The local students make up about 8 percent of the Thayer student body and receive \$675,000 in financial aid – 17 percent of the financial aid budget.
- Playing fields are offered free of charge for weekend use by town youth leagues in the spring and fall, representing \$100,000 of foregone rental revenues.
- Thayer pays \$50,000 to the city in annual real estate taxes on its residential properties and last year paid building and grading fees of more than \$200,000.
- More than \$100,000 in improvements to neighborhood streets have been made by Thayer in recent years.
- Donations were made to the local police and fire departments for equipment purchases, and to the Thayer Public Library for its new building.
- Braintree’s Daily Field was renovated by Thayer at a cost of \$75,000 and is maintained at the school’s expense in exchange for rent-free use.
- Camp Thayer’s summer programs attract 144 local children.



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Thayer students visit local nursing and rehabilitation facilities, work on local Habitat for Humanity projects, play sports with local children who have disabilities and work with children at a nearby Montessori School.

Thayer's Driver's Education program is available to Braintree residents, a local drum and bugle corps uses the academy's facilities at no charge and the Thayer art gallery is used free of charge by the Braintree Art Association for its annual exhibitions. All of the gallery's shows are open to the community during school hours.

Students also raise money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society of Massachusetts, take part in the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walk and donate blood to the MGH Blood Mobile. Faculty members and students ride in the Pan Mass Challenge, a two-day bike ride to benefit the Jimmy Fund.

To find out more about Thayer's community involvement and to see its complete community impact statement, go to [www.thayer.org](http://www.thayer.org).

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### **CAMPUS POLICE**

Senate Bill 1872 and House Bill 3249: An Act to Provide for the Public Inspection of Records Made or Received by Special State Police Officers at Educational Institutions and Hospitals

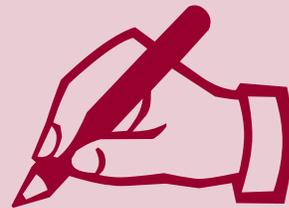
These two similarly worded bills focus on the logs of complaints, crimes, arrests and charges that are maintained by campus police officers who have been designated as special state police officers. These officers have the power to make arrests.

#### **Why MANS&C opposes these bills:**

- Adequate regulations already exist concerning the officers and their logs.
- Campuses are a unique environment in which students have their own organizations that set up codes of conduct and disciplinary measures.
- This bill would interfere with the relationship between the campus police, administration and students.

**Status:** John W. Spillane, MANS&C legislative counsel, opposed these bills in testimony at a public hearing of the Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

**Sponsors:** **SB1872** Sen. Patricia D. Jehlen; **HB3249** Rep. Carl M. Sciortino Jr. of Medford and Rep. Kevin G. Honan of Boston



## **Upcoming Meetings**

The MANS&C executive board has scheduled the following meetings for the coming months:

December 20, 2007

January 17, 2008

February 21, 2008

March 27, 2008

April 17, 2008

The annual meeting and election of officers and board members will be held May 15, 2008. Meetings generally are held at the Wellesley College Club.