

Worcester Night Life classes to return

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WORCESTER – After dwindling the last few years before finally disappearing last fall, the Worcester public schools' night classes will return this spring.

The Night Life division is slated to begin offering classes again at the end of this month, starting out with around 30 courses, ranging from career technical training to leisure activities.

That expansive catalog represents a significant revival of a program that since 2014 has only been offering plumbing and electrical classes, according to school officials. Even those courses ended last fall, which is when the school department brought on Liz Tiley, who oversaw the night class program at the Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School in Northampton, to rebuild Worcester's program as its new director.

While she has a small budget to work with – the funding for the initiative is mostly for her salary – Ms. Tiley said Worcester is an untapped market for adult education.

“Within two years (of working on the Smith program), it was self-sustaining,” she said. “I can't imagine there would be any way this program won't be successful.”

One advantage of Worcester's “lean operations,” she said, is that “we're able to offer classes at a less expensive price.” Night Life courses range from \$35 to \$1,595, and average about \$10 an hour.

The majority of the classes are dependent on students signing up for them, however, since they are meant to be self-sustaining. This year's electrical and plumbing courses are the exception, and will be offered regardless of enrollment.

On Friday, Ms. Tiley said only a few dozen people had registered for classes so far, “but we just put the calendar up yesterday.”

Classes will be offered at Worcester Tech – “an amazing facility,” she said, that has the infrastructure needed for Night Life's career technical training courses in particular. The program is starting out with licensing and certification pathways in several trades, including allied health careers like phlebotomy technician, medical assistant, and billing and coding specialist.

The catalog also includes courses meant to “just get people out of the house and have some fun at night,” Ms. Tiley said, like beekeeping, floral design, yoga, and golf. In addition, there are classes in memoir writing, photography, web development, and business and finance. A full list, as well as sign-up information, is online at worcesternightlife.org.