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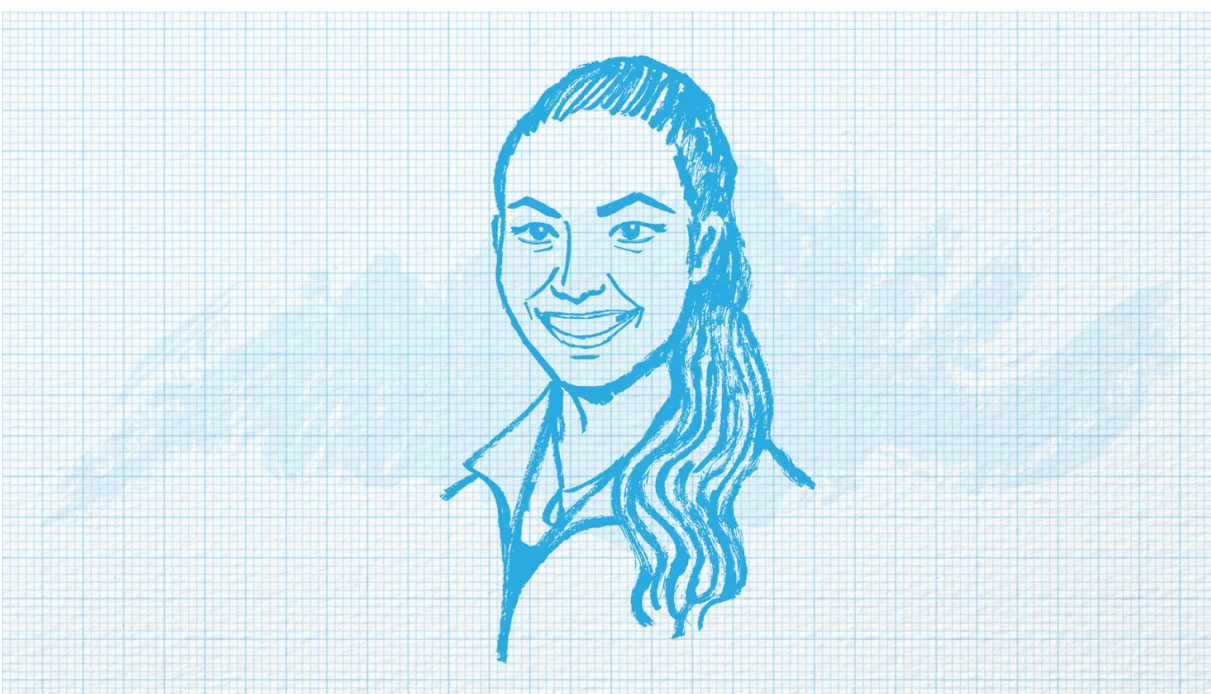
Q&A

Meet Justice Barrows

Thomaston Recreation Director. Fan of new experiences, collaborations and being active.

As Told to Sheila D. Grant

Apr 10, 2026



Justice Barrows

Illustrated by Christopher David Ryan

Barrows enjoys bringing people together and creating opportunities for the community to connect. Her work focuses on building inclusive, engaging programs for all ages/ interests, balancing creativity with organization. Ultimately, it's about creating experiences that help people feel connected and proud of their community.

Q: How long have you been the Thomaston recreation director, and what made you want to apply?

A: Since May 2025, I've been coaching a girls travel basketball team for about five years, and that's how I learned about the opening. Not knowing the details of what else goes into recreation, I have just enjoyed every piece that's come up!

Q: What do you enjoy about the job?

A: I really enjoy the people side of the job. Getting to create programs and events where people can connect, relax and have a good time is incredibly rewarding. I like that every day is different, there's always something new to plan, solve or improve. Seeing the community show up, participate and genuinely enjoy what we've put together makes all the behind-the-scenes work worth it.

Q: What do you find challenging/surprising about the job?

A: One of the biggest challenges is finding and maintaining a strong volunteer base. Volunteers are essential to many of our programs and events, but people are busy and it can be difficult to consistently recruit and retain help.

It's also been a bit surprising how much behind-the-scenes coordination goes into even small events, from logistics and communication to contingency planning. That said, those challenges have pushed me to be more creative in outreach and more intentional about building relationships within the community.

Q: Thomaston Recreation is partnering with the Thomaston Police Department to launch a new Community Comfort Line program. What's that all about?

A: The Community Comfort Line is a partnership focused on supporting our senior community through simple, regular check-ins. It's designed to help seniors feel connected, safe and remembered, especially those who may live alone or have limited daily interaction.

Q: How do seniors sign up, who will be calling them, and how often?

A: There is an online signup, and also a paper application available at the Town Office. And officers have cards to help people sign up if they see anybody in person. Seniors receive a weekly call from the Thomaston Police Department administrator. She will have their emergency contact, as well, so if she didn't get ahold of a senior, she would call their daughter or other relative to ask if they have talked to the senior recently. If not, we go ahead with an in-person wellness check and the emergency contact knows what we're doing.

Q: Are there other programs of which you are especially proud or excited about?

A: I'm excited about new programs, including an adult slow-pitch softball league and walking groups. They are approachable ways to stay active, connect with others, and just get out of the house.

Q: What is slow-pitch softball and how is it different from regular softball? How do people sign up and when does practice start?

A: Slow-pitch was new to me, as well. Rather than pitch overhand, you use an underhand throw, which is safer for adults with jobs who can't risk injury. It's very popular in the area — there are leagues in Wiscasset and Camden — so we're just kind of jumping on the bandwagon. It will just be games on Mondays and Tuesdays starting in May, but teams are welcome to have batting practice. People can sign up on our website. (thomastonmaine.gov/recreation)

Q: How many new walking groups are there, where do they walk and how do folks sign up?

A: I'm still working the details out. It will be volunteer-run, but I will start it. We have great trails. I'd like to have a walking group for new mothers, a walking group for seniors and then a general walking group to create smaller communities within the larger community just for a healthy activity.

Q: What else would you like readers to know?

A: I encourage residents to visit our updated website, [thomastonmaine.gov/recreation](https://www.thomastonmaine.gov/recreation), to stay up to date on programs and events. Community input is important and I'm always happy to hear ideas, feedback or connect with anyone interested in volunteering.

For more information about Thomaston Recreation Department programs, call Justice Barrows at 354-6107, ext. 115, or email jbarrows@thomastonmaine.gov.

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Sheila Grant

Calendar editor