The Sidewalks of Needham

A Crowd-Sourced Poem
in which the contributions of 90 Needhamites of all ages
are woven together by Needham Poet Laureate Anne E.G. Nydam
(October-November, 2025)

On the sidewalks of Needham
Neighbors greet each other with bright smiles,
Friends stop to talk together,
Strangers gesture "hello" as they pass,
Enveloped in a welcoming aura,
Accepting all cultures and backgrounds,
In a feeling of belonging.
Neighbors help each other with kindness and caring,
A comforting phone call, or stopping by just to say "hi,"
And telling each other "It's gonna be okay,"
Building a warm community of connections
Linked by the sidewalks of Needham.

Over the sidewalks of Needham
Canopies of oak and pine shelter
Squirrels, rabbits, and chipmunks.
We share our yard with turkeys, deer, and the occasional coyote.
The trees change with the seasons:
Spring blossom, summer green,
Autumn red and yellow foliage,
Winter grey lace against the sky.
The waterfowl on Rosemary Lake
Are neighbors, too, greeting those who pass
In four seasons' weather beneath the maples
Along the sidewalks of Needham.

Long before the sidewalks of Needham,
The river circled us on three sides.
It shapes us, drains us, and soothes us.
Memories of family members rest in the Needham cemeteries.
From the grandfather in the cricket league that named Cricket Field,
And all the generations before us,
Family vibes still ring out here.
Memories of homes torn down and replaced
For others to make new memories,
While school memories of all kinds
Flow on like the river,
Which will keep flowing
Long after the sidewalks of Needham.

Up and down the sidewalks of Needham
We start families,
Watch the world anew as our children grow,
Playing in the streets with friends,
Walking dogs.
We share block parties, and soccer,
Sacraments and faith centers, church bells ringing downtown,
Train horns reminding us of our easy access to Boston,
Close to schools, pool, and library.
We share traditions that go on and on,
Fireworks and parades, blue tree lighting,
Friday night football under the lights,
Fun on the Common,
The enchanting Martini Junction in the town forest,
Celebrating Sunita Williams.
The sidewalks of Needham are
Secure enough to leave doors unlocked,
A safe place, a haven for our family,
And then, as children leave,
Where we can be independent as we age in life's journey.
It is good to us in all stages of life, anchored
By the sidewalks of Needham.

Connected by the sidewalks of Needham
People are active and helpful,
Feeling responsible for the town,
With the opportunity to have a voice in town politics.
There is citizen engagement and
Community involvement in so many activities,
From the high school
(With amazing Superintendent Gutekanst)
To Needham Free Public Library
(Loving that Needham has a Poet Laureate),
The Center at the Heights, and the beautiful brick Town Hall.
So many local small businesses,
(Volante Farms, Ray's New Garden,
Sweet Basil, Masala Art, and more),
Running into a store and knowing people,
All along the sidewalks of Needham.

Happy and thankful to drive home to Needham,
Once your senses register familiar sights, sounds, smells,
A sense of tranquility can't be put into words, but
You exhale and think "I'm home,"
Woven and held in the comforting lattice
Of the sidewalks of Needham.

Find out more

about the Needham Poet Laureate Program here:

and about the work of Anne E.G. Nydam here: