

Union's Hometown Newspaper

#### Issue 78 • June 2017

# **UHS PEER AMBASSADOR PROGRAM**



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Union High School's Peer Ambassadors Leadership Program was first established in 2012, as the Peer Mentors Program. The purpose of the program was to have students serve as mentors to incoming freshmen. Since that time, the program has become a full Leadership Program, under the direction of Patricia Bridges, School Counselor at Union High School. This program provides a space and place where students realize the leader that is within them by offering opportunities to exercise innovation, initiative and strengthbased leadership. Since its establishment, the number of Peer Ambassadors has grown from twenty-five mentors to over one hundred and fifty. As a group of leaders, the theme has always been: "Serve our School and Community – Changes our Nation - Impacts the World"

In 2015, Mrs. Bridges contacted EF Tours (Education First) regarding an International Service Learning trip for the Peer Ambassadors. The trip was an extraordinary opportunity where the parents of the students invested in their global education. They joined with groups from New York and

Virginia to work with the Environmental School in Jarabacua Republica Dominicana.

Recently, over Spring Break, four Peer Ambassadors accompanied Mrs. Bridges to Caberete Republica Dominicana to work with the Empowering Girls Service Learning Opportunity with Mariposa, a Non-profit Organization that educates, empowers girls and works to employ young women who have graduated from their program. The ambassadors from UHS worked together with a group from Boston, MA to help the girls to beautify the Mariposa Center and interact with the Mariposa girls in preparation for their Earth Day Celebration on April 22, 2017.

Global education is a precious investment in the lives of our young adults and potential leaders. Mrs. Bridges will continue in her passion to educate adolescents through global travel and service learning. She will be traveling again in 2019, giving families and students an entire year to financially plan and emotionally prepare for this global and life-changing experience.





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# **DO YOU WANNA TO BUILD A SNOWMAN?**

Thanks to a Student Council Fundraiser, the ASPCA will be the recipient of \$2,263 raised by Battle Hill Elementary School in Union. Each classroom began with a paper snowman which included two eyes, a mouth and a scarf. Donations were secured when students pooled their funds and exchanged them for 'snow' dollars which were used to make purchases in order to accessorize their class snowman. Each accessory was allocated a number of points which aligned with the price, such as the mustache, which was five 'snow' dollars and the special edition 'dabbing' arms which were fifteen 'snow' dollars.

In addition to items being purchased, the students were encouraged to flaunt their best behavior on a daily basis in order to earn accessories being given away by special area teachers. The motivation behind this was for the students to recognize it isn't just about monetary donations, but about outstanding behavior as well. For example, an art pallet was given out by the art teachers while a stethoscope was given out by the nurse. Each special area accessory was assigned a value of seventeen points.

Students and teachers alike were excited and determined for their snowman to have the most value at the end. At the conclusion of the event, Mrs. Turner's third grade class was the overall winner. The class chose to donate the \$2,263 to the ASPCA. They received pretzels and ice pops courtesy of the Student Council. The grade level winners included Mrs. Juarez/Ms. Rosa/Mrs. Duggan's Pre-K classes, Mrs. Musarra/Mrs. Erickson's Kindergarten classes, Ms. Melillo's first grade class, Mrs. Marano's second grade class, and Miss Brehm's fourth grade class. Each grade level winner also received ice pops as a small token to say thank you.



(above) Mrs. Turner's Third Grade Class with Student Council Advisors Alison Brehm and Jessica Mongiovi Mrs. Turner's snowman Goal Thermometer Chart



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# **MASTERFUL ADVICE:**

Broadway Star Billy Porter Gives Students at Kean Receive Career Career Advice

Billy Porter has presence. That's one thing the told, to represent people that aren't being Broadway star made clear to the Kean University

students who attended his master class in April.

"You have to stand out in an audition," he said. "You have to own your space. When I walk onto a stage or into a room, rest assured people are looking at me because I have presence."

Porter implores young people to stop looking down at their phones, to stand up straight and walk with confidence.

"You have to empower yourself," said Porter, who starred as the original Lola in Kinky Boots. "Don't look at the floor or at the piano player. Don't ask for validation. You can't be an actor and be on stage if you don't want people looking at you. Take your power."

Five Kean University Theater Conservatory students including Brianna Javis of Union; were given the opportunity to work one-on-one with Porter during the master class. Earlier this season, the talented students were among those who sang in front of a sold-out audience alongside Broadway legend Patti LuPone.

"His confidence on stage is what I aspire to," said Javis, a junior theatre major.

Javis used her gospel-like voice to belt out 'I am Changing' from Dreamgirls. Porter stressed the importance of proper breathing in order to finish the song without running out of steam.

"That voice is fabulous and you have to trust it, and you don't trust it," he said. "You think you do, but you don't. You have to learn how to breathe and how to release it all. And release your expectations of what it should sound like, because it doesn't have to sound like anything but you."

"It's not easy," Porter said. "It's not supposed to be easy, but you're supposed to make it seem easy. You've got a beautiful voice in there."

As an actor, director and writer, Porter spoke of the importance of learning all different aspects of theater in addition to singing and acting.

"For me, the work dried up for 13 years," he said. "The only thing that saved me was going to the page. I wanted to tell stories that aren't being

represented."

Javis is grateful for the lessons she and her classmates learned from Porter's master class.

"He saw something in us that can be pushed, and can be tweaked and improved, and he used it and made us understand ourselves," she said.

Holly Logue, who heads Kean's Theater Conservatory, was pleased to have Porter conduct the master class for the students.

"Any time you have the opportunity to be coached by someone who has made a career in theater is an invaluable learning experience," she said. "Our proximity to New York affords us these opportunities. It's one of the things that is very special about Kean University."



(above) Junior Theatre major Brianna Javis from Union gets some sage advice from Tony and Grammy Award winner Tony Porter..



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# JEFFERSON SCHOOL HOSTS SPELLING BEE

Mayor's Spelling Bee on May 5th, under the direction of 5th Grade teacher Karen Steiner. Deputy Mayor Joseph Florio and Superintendent of Recreation DJ Salvante were on hand to celebrate.

First place winner was Oseka Balogun, and 2nd Place winner was Andrew Arce. Steiner, who has been in charge of the Spelling Bee for twentyyears, shared "It is extraordinary how challenging

Jefferson School hosted their 23rd Annual the words are and how the contestants are truly great spellers. They just 'have it!' I always encourage the winner and runner up to enter any spelling bee that they hear about in the future. When it comes down to two or three contestants it does become very, very exciting for all! The students in the audience were terrific, so respectful, so encouraging! I was so proud of the Jefferson students!" Congratulations to all of the participants!





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# **HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS HELP OUT LOCAL GIRL SCOUTS**



Union High School Students volunteered their time to help out a local Union Girl Scout Troop sort and distribute Girl Scout Cookies recently. The Troop, under the leadership of Shonda Dennis, is comprised of 8th, 9th, and 10th grade students from across the town. Dennis serves as the Service Unit Cookie Manager, and her and her troop organize community service cookie sorting events, seeking help from members of the community to assist.

UHS Students came ready to help sort and

unload two truckloads of cookies, amounting into 2,231 cases of cookies! Some students went above and beyond, coming in earlier and staying later until every last box was distributed. They helped with clean up at the end of the night, and were a huge asset to the grateful troop. Dennis shared "The most beautiful part was that all of the students carried a positive attitude the entire time. They were AMAZING! Working side by side with the students felt as though we were working with

peers - They were very professional. Having the Union High School students there really saved the day. Honestly, words can't express how grateful we all are... Union High School is the BEST!!"

The scouts sell cookies to raise monies to continue to provide programming to go on trips to new adventures and to sharpen their leadership skills. They work with scouts from all over the United States and other countries. They truly are future leaders!

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# **UNION BREAKS GROUND ON STREETSCAPE PROJECT**

The rebirth of Union Center has been a long time coming. What started with the filling of vacancies quickly progressed to the initiation of two major development projects, and just last week- the groundbreaking of the Stuyvesant Ave Streetscape Project.

"The goals of these capital investments are two fold," said Mayor Suzette Cavadas, "one is very obviously aesthetic, where we want to bring a certain vibrancy back to the area but economic as





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locally owned since 1984 www.vdsnj.com facebook.com/vdsnj email: ira@vdsnj.com 908-964-4004 406 Chestnut St. • Union, NJ 07083 well, where we aim to increase foot traffic while simultaneously bringing in new business that would help the Center- and all of Union thrive."

The project includes a comprehensive overhaul of the sidewalks, curbs, lights and crosswalks in the Special Improvement District (S.I.D.) which will completely change the ambiance and increase pedestrian safety in the area. It will culminate with the milling and paving of Stuyvesant Ave.- an area which residents have been inquiring about in recent months.

The concept for the project was created by Arterial Design Studio, with input from the Township of Union, and Maser Consulting who serve as the Township's Engineers. They took into account aesthetics, safety, and traffic concerns as well as feedback from residents on what they would like to see in the center.

"We feel as though this project is critical for the revitalization of the downtown," said David Lustberg, CEO and Managing Principal of Arterial Design Studio. Arterial offers a well-rounded suite of Planning and Design services to assist their clients in creating places that people enjoy. From public improvements to private development, they focus their expertise on three core service areas: Street Design, Parks and Spaces and Place Branding.

"The 'look' of the downtown needs a facelift. It's been nearly a quarter of a century since the last one and that is part of the reason why we are riding the line of comeback," said Joe Leo, Owner of Here's the Story Bookstore, and S.I.D. Board President. "The changes I expect to see in Union Center are a fresh, new, updated look and with that, the attraction of new and vibrant business which will give the downtown the 21st century infusion it needs."

Construction, performed by Zuccaro Inc., will start this week, beginning at Magic Fountain, on Stuyvesant Ave. and work down towards Morris Ave. The first phase of the project is projected to be completed by fall, 2017.



(above) Mayor Suzette Cavadas, Deputy Mayor Joseph Florio, Committeewoman Michele Delisfort, Committeeman Manuel Figueiredo, Township Administrator Ron Manzella, Assistant Township Administrator Tammie Kopin, S.I.D. Director Fatimah Raymond, and Township Engineer Joseph Venezia, were joined by Dave Lustberg, CEO and Managing Principal of Arterial Design Studio, and several business owners from the S.I.D. for the groundbreaking on the Stuyvesant Ave Streetscape Project. (photo courtesy of the Township of Union)



## **UNION TOWNSHIP'S MOVIES UNDER THE STARS TO RETURN JUNE 16TH**

their Movies Under the Stars through the Department of Recreation for its fourth year. Held at Rabkin Park, the Movies draw residents from the far reaches of town, and provide a one of a kind source of family entertainment.

"Going to the movies is a great all-American past time," said Mayor Suzette Cavadas. "The Township's Movies Under the Stars combine everything we love about movie nights with the beautiful weather that comes with the warmer months."

The first movie, Sing, will be held on Friday, June 16th at 8:45 p.m. with a pre-movie performance by the Play Theater Kids Cabaret at 7:30 p.m.

The highly rated animated movie follows the story of an eternally optimistic koala who puts on a singing competition to save his failing theater. In the process, animals across the city gather to step into the spotlight and chase their dreams. Featuring a star-studded cast, the likes of Matthew McConaughey, Reese Witherspoon and Seth MacFarlane, Sing is a feel-good movie for people of all ages.

Stay tuned to the Township of Union on

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The Township of Union is proud to bring back Facebook or on the web at uniontownship.com for information on the second movie, Disney's Moana, to be shown during Mayor's weekend in September.



(above) Committeeman Manuel Figuereido with movie-goers at last year's Movie in the Park, The Jungle Book. Photo Courtesy of the Township of Union

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# **4TH GRADE GIFTED AND TALENTED ENTREPRENEUR CHALLENGE**

Union's 4th grade Gifted and Talented students literally blown away to see the talent the kids from each elementary school explored the basics of the business world. Students learned about advertising, target markets, financial data, and Education, World Language and ESL stated, "It investing. Students worked in teams to create their own mock businesses and design business plans that would allow their businesses to succeed. Students created their own magazine advertisements, wrote, filmed, and edited their own commercials, created business cards, and wrote a financial plan for investors. The final project was to put all of their research and business ideas together into a PowerPoint slideshow that they would present to "Investors."

Each elementary school held their own competition where these business ideas were presented. The winning team from each school then got to present their business ideas on May 15th in the District Wide Entrepreneur Challenge, which took place at Hannah Caldwell Elementary School. Business leaders from Bed Bath & Beyond helped in judging each team and the Challenge was a huge success. The top three finishing teams were awarded medals and the first place team was presented the annual trophy.



(above) 2nd Place: Forget Not Watch: Washington School.



Over the past several months, the Township of District IT Director Sandra Paul shared "I was have."

> Judge Yvonne Lorenzo, Supervisor of Career was a pleasure to judge the District Youth Entrepreneur Challenge. The students and their teachers all worked very hard to create and market their businesses. It was incredible to witness what these 4th graders were able to accomplish. They are all winners as far as I'm concerned." Fellow Judge Ann Hart, Director of

Special Projects added, "The G&T Youth Entrepreneur Competition is such a wonderful event, and I was thrilled to judge the competition this year. To see and experience the ideas and thought process of these wonderfully intelligent, and creative students is an honor. The students are so creative and their ability to think up ideas, create samples, and present their concepts in such a clear and creative way makes me so proud to be a part of this community."

Congratulations to all the students who participated!



(above) 1st Place: IC-E-Steam: Battle Hill School.



(above) 3rd Place: A.D. Artcessories: Connecticut Farms School.

# UNION PUBLIC LIBRARY SUMMER READING PROGRAM: BUILD A BETTER WORLD

The Summer Reading Program is back and better than ever! Join us at the library all summer long for games, programs, and reading! Check out some of the things you can look forward to:

ShopRite of Union Presents: "Kid Cuisine, Book Bingo, Codeable Camps, JUMBO Board Games, Lego Challenge, Bash the Trash, DIY Slime, And tons of prizes!

We'll be hosting TWO fun packed Summer Reading Kick-Off Events on Saturday, June 10th from 11 AM - 3 PM and Thursday, June 15th from 3 PM - 5 PM at Vauxhall. Please call (908) 851-5451 to register for the Vauxhall event!



# UNION CHAMBER'S JUNE NETWORKING EVENT THE 21ST ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST

The Union Township Chamber of Commerce invites the business community to its 21st Annual Legislative Breakfast for an opportunity to meet and hear from elected officials. Held in partnership with the Greater Elizabeth Chamber of Commerce, the event will feature state, county, and local officials who will share issues and updates pertinent to business and industry.

The event will take place from 8-10 a.m. on Friday, June 30th, 2017, at the Boys and Girls Clubs of Union County, 1050 Jeanette Avenue, Union. A light breakfast will also be served.

Admission is \$20 for Chamber members and \$30 for guests. Pre-registration is required by

contacting the Union Chamber of Commerce at 908-688-2777 or by emailing executivedirector@unionchamber.com.

"This is our 21st year of conducting this very popular and well-attended event," said Chamber Executive James Masterson. "This program provides our members with the opportunity to meet with their elected officials and discuss specific items of interest with them."

The Union Township Chamber of Commerce is a professional association dedicated to strengthening, uniting, promoting and representing member businesses located in Union and the surrounding area.



### Spirit of UNION • Page 13 • June 2017 HANNAH CALDWELL DAY 2017

Hannah Caldwell Day 2017 will be commemorated on Sunday, June 4, by the Union Township Historical Society with an open house from 2 to 5 pm at the Caldwell Parsonage, 909 Caldwell Avenue, Union. Visitors will be greeted by Rev. James Caldwell, portrayed Doc Burkhardt. Colonial doll-making lessons will be given, and historic games will be played. Admission is free. For more information, please call Barbara La Mort at 908-687-0048.



(above) "Rev. James Caldwell" Marks Anniversary of Hannah's Death: Doc Burkhardt as Rev. James Caldwell, protesting his wife's death at the hands of the British during the Battle of Connecticut Farms on June 7, 1780.



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9	HALF PAGE	10" x 6"	\$320	\$800	\$1000	\$1350	\$1500	\$1800	\$2100
12	Units	10" x 8"	\$360	\$900	\$1200	\$1550	\$1800	\$2150	\$2500
18	FULL PAGE	10" x 14"	\$400	\$1000	\$1400	\$1750	\$2000	\$2400	\$2800
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# **MONISOLA OMOLE 2017 YOUTH OF THE YEAR**

pleased to announce Monisola Omole as the 2017 Youth of the Year. Monisola, 18, is a senior at Union High School, with a focus on advanced science and math. She has been a member of the Boys & Girls Clubs for seven years and is currently the President of the Union Keystone Club. At the Club, she participates in Girl Talk, Stand and Deliver, and Lords and Ladies. Monisola has worked as a peer tutor in the Buddie Program and helps the younger members with homework. Monisola is planning to be a Biomedical Engineer or Reproductive Endocrinologist.

Monisola was chosen by a panel of 7 judges. "Youth of the Year is the highest honor for Club members", Russell Triolo, CEO, proudly stated. "Members are recognized for their contributions in promoting service to our clubs, community and family, academic success, strong moral character, life goals, and poise and public speaking ability. It is a joy to see these youth grow and develop as young adults."

Outside of the club, Monisola also dedicates her time to her schoolwork and clubs in school, such as Senior Class Advisory Board, Peer Diplomat Leadership Program, Red Cross Club, Future Medical Leaders and the International Outreach Club. She is also the captain of the Girls Basketball team at Union High School. In Keystone Club, Monisola has organized and participated in fundraising for Children's Specialized Hospital, as well as hosting children at the Club for a special night of fun, as well community engagement activities.

"Boys & Girls Clubs has helped me find

Boys & Girls Clubs of Union County is eased to announce Monisola Omole as the 2017 buth of the Year. Monisola, 18, is a senior at nion High School, with a focus on advanced school, it may have been too late."

> Her career interests stem from other family members in similar career paths and she hopes to follow in their footsteps. She has been accepted to five colleges: Rutgers, NJIT (partial scholarship), Bethune Cookman (full scholarship), Delaware State University (partial scholarship) and North Carolina A & T.

> Chris Hillmann, President of Hillmann Consulting, has continued with his generous sponsorship of the Youth of the Year Program and will award each of the three finalists with a \$2,000 scholarship, Monisola will receive a \$4,000 scholarship.

> The Youth of the Year Program is the premier recognition program for Club members, promoting service to Club, community and family; academic success; strong moral character; life goals and poise in public speaking. This year's Youth of the Year finalists were: Jalynn White, 16, (Union Club); Anandah Gomez, 17, (Plainfield Club); Najiyyah Dunn, 17, (Elizabeth Club); and Monisola Omole, 18, (Union Club).

> Next, Monisola will compete for the Boys & Girls Clubs New Jersey State Youth of the Year title in June. We wish her the best of luck now and in her future.

Boys & Girls Clubs of Union County

Boys & Girls Clubs of Union County seek to inspire and enable young people, who need them most, to realize their full potential and have provided opportunity for youth since 1955. They are part of a national network of some 4,000 neighborhood-based facilities, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, which serves more than 4.6 million young people annually, in all 50 states and on U.S. military bases worldwide. Clubs provide guidance-oriented character development programs on a daily basis for children 6-18 years old, conducted by a full-time professional staff. Key Boys & Girls Club programs emphasize leadership development, education and career exploration, financial literacy, health and life skills, the arts, sports, fitness and recreation, and family outreach.



(above) 2017 Youth of the Year Winner, Monisola Omole Announced

## UNION'S SUMMER CONCERT SERIES RETURNS ON JULY 4TH

The Township of Union's 2017 Summer Concert Series kicks off on July 4th with John Christian and Soiree at Biertuempfel Park, the series will feature concerts in the park every Thursday in July beginning July 13th.

"We have an outstanding lineup this year," said Mayor Suzette Cavadas, "In addition to bringing back some fan favorites we've added some brand new acts to the series that ensure there is really something for everyone."

The series is set to include:

- John Christian and Soiree, July 4th at Biertuempfel Park. This Standard and Contemporary Band entertains with just the right mix of R&B, Disco, Motown, Jazz and Top 40's.
- Smooth Band and Orchestra, July 13th at Rabkin Park. Smooth is a complete Motown revue that will take you back through the sounds of the Temptations, the Four Tops and many more.
- Radio Nashville, July 20th at Rabkin Park. This six-piece band performs the top modern Country hits from Keith Urban, Carrie Underwood, and Taylor Swift to Blake

Shelton and more.

• Gloria's Miami Sound featuring Nikki Torres, July 27th at Rabkin Park. The ultimate tribute to Gloria Estefan and the Miami Sound Machine includes all of the chart-topping hits of the iconic performer including "On Your Feet", "Conga" and many more.

Concerts are open to the public and are free of charge to attend. They run from 7:30 p.m.-9:00 p.m.- blankets and chairs are welcome. Local food trucks will also be present vending food and refreshments.

For more information, visit www.uniontownship.com or contact Natalie Pineiro, Public Information Officer, at 908-851-5096 or at publicinfo@uniontownship.com.

Concerts are sponsored by various community partners, for more information on sponsoring one of our concerts please contact Township of Union Administration at 908-851-8500.



(above l-r) Russell Triolo, CEO Boys & Girls Clubs of Union County; Monisola Omele, 2017 Youth of the Year; Robert Poles, President Board of Directors, Boys & Girls Clubs of Union County.



See above display and others at www.cambridgepavers.com