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UHSPAC WINS 3 PAPER MILL RISING STAR AWARDS; ALSO FEATURED IN PBS DOCUMENTARY

The Union High School Performing Arts Company (UHSPAC) added to their accolades three Paper Mill Playhouse Rising Star (PMPRS) Awards for their spring production of Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella. The show had been nominated for ten PMPRS Awards. Since their inception in 1996, the Paper Mill Playhouse Rising Star Awards for excellence in high school musical theatre have ignited the careers of many notable performers, all of whom attended high school in New Jersey.

The award ceremony was broadcast live on HomeTowne TV and featured a performance by the seven nominated schools for Outstanding Overall Production. The UHSPAC performed a medley of songs from Cinderella including "The Prince is Giving a Ball," and "Ten Minutes Ago." The beautifully executed performance featured Rising Star Nominee Jason Yanto as Lord Pinkleton, Crystal Wright as Cinderella, and an ensemble of dancers including Joseph Laurino as Prince Topher, who waltzed into the audience's hearts.

"Last night was a wonderful reminder of the importance of arts education," shared Laura Muller, the Co-Music Director and Orchestra Conductor. "Every student from every school showed their passion, humility and determination while performing at the Rising Star Awards. I am so incredibly humbled to have been honored and so proud of the creative team, cast, crew and especially the orchestra of Cinderella. To be honored for their outstanding performance is icing on the cake of a wonderful production process with these student performers."

Director James Mosser added, "The Rising Star Awards presented by the Tony Award Winning Paper Mill Playhouse are one of the premier programs for theatre recognition in the country. It is always a pleasure to be recognized as one of top programs in the state. The highlight is watching our students perform on the Paper Mill stage. I could not be more proud of our students."

Weeks before, the UHSPAC boasted participation in another television broadcast. The world had the opportunity

(below) The Orchestra members of Cinderella.

(Continued on page 2)



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RISING STARS (continued)

to watch the UHSPAC in the PBS documentary "I Can't... I Have Rehearsal," which aired on Wednesday, May 17th at 8:00pm. They had been selected as one of six schools to be featured for excellence in theater education. Last year, camera crews followed them around as they mounted their production of Disney's Mary Poppins.

The documentary featured rehearsal and performance footage from the show, as well as exclusive interviews with Director James Mosser and UHSPAC Alumni, Jonathan Duvelson who starred as Bert.

Duvelson currently is a BFA Musical Theater major at Montclair State University and shared, "I am so fortunate that I am able to be featured in this documentary, and that I can show people just how hard we, as theater people, work to make the shows great. Being in the Performing Arts Department at Union High School allowed me to transition into college with ease, and to excel past what is expected, and challenge myself to be better every day."

"It was a very fun experience for all of us to have a camera crew follow us around," added

Director Mosser. "The documentary gives a nice insight into how hard our students work, and how much it means to them. I'm incredibly proud of how we are represented in this film."

UHSPAC's Cinderella wins included:

- Outstanding Orchestra
- Outstanding Achievement in Music Direction
- Outstanding Achievement in Lighting Design

UHSPAC nominations included:

- Outstanding Costume Design- Leslie Laurino, James Mosser, Jennifer Williams
- Outstanding Lighting Design - Christopher Annas-Lee
- Outstanding Scenic Design - Diane Esquivel & James Mosser
- Outstanding Music Direction - Laura Muller & James Mosser
- Outstanding Orchestra
- Outstanding Chorus
- Featured Actor- Jason Yanto as Lord Pinkleton
- Outstanding Choreography- Jennifer Williams
- Outstanding Direction- James Mosser
- Outstanding Overall Production



(above) UHSPAC's 2017 Production Cinderella.



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UNION COUNTY INTERFAITH COORDINATING COUNCIL

The Union County interfaith Coordinating Council, an organization of clergy and lay persons representing all faith traditions, held an Interfaith Prayer Unity Service at the First United Methodist Church, Westfield, NJ on July 20. This event followed a solidarity gathering held on June 28 at Temple Sha'arey Shalom in Springfield, NJ.

Additional programs are being planned including supporting Union County

Thanksgiving Services in November, a Homeless Sabbath in December and the Third Annual Day of Prayer Service at The Parish Community of St. Helen in Westfield on October 24.

For more information on the Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council please contact Rod Spearman at rspearman@caunj.org or UCInterfaith@caunj.org or by phone @ (908) 354-3040 x 4324.

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(above) The following clergy, spokespersons and musicians participated in this truly ecumenical service: The Rev. Dr. David Mertz, host pastor of The First United Methodist Church of Westfield, Rev. Anthony Randazzo of Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church of Westfield, Rev. Carmine Pernini of Zion Lutheran Church, Rahway, Rev. Ann Marie Alderman of the First Unitarian Society of Plainfield, Zaghaym Chaundry of the Muslim Community Center of Union County, Eric Kussman, Jr. of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Springfield, Rev. Mayra Castaneda of the First Baptist Church of Westfield, Rev. Richard Hogans, Chaplain of the Union County Correctional Center & Shiloh Baptist Church in Elizabeth, Rabbi Ethan Prosnit of Temple Emanuel, Westfield and Dr. Mohammed Ali Chaudry of the Islamic Society of Basking Ridge. Music selections were provided by Jonathan Evers of the First United Methodist Church of Westfield and Cynthia Manno of the Townley Presbyterian Church in Union.

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UNION INVESTS IN DOWNTOWN WITH DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENTS

Residents will soon see a dramatic change in Union Center as the Township of Union Planning Board recently approved an application from American Landmark Developers to develop 300 linear feet of Stuyvesant Ave starting at Terminal Mill Ends and moving towards Unity Bank. The development will include new retail and residential spaces.

The move comes on the cusp of the start of the Stuyvesant Ave Streetscape Project, a complete overhaul of the street, curbs, sidewalks and street fixtures on the busy thoroughfare; all in an effort to turn Union Center into a focal point for a new lifestyle experience.

"We know that the topic of conversation for quite some time has been with regard to revitalization," said Mayor Suzette Cavadas.

Union Center is frequently remembered as a hub for community and quality shopping. But after years of wear, and then the online shopping boom, the Center has been in need of some new energy.

Sara Perara and her brother Rob have owned "Van Gogh's Ear," a popular café in Union Center for almost 8 years. In discussing the coming transformation she notes that they thought long and hard about moving after their first year in business.

"In the end we decided to stick it out," Perara said, "I am so thrilled we made that decision. With the Streetscape Project and the prospect of putting more apartments in we can finally thrive instead of just getting by."

Township Administrator Ron Manzella noted that the Township Committee and Administration have been at the table discussing how to transform Union Center for a number of years.

"What people don't seem to understand is that there were some very fundamental, and costly issues that needed to be dealt with before we jumped into redevelopment and beautification," Manzella said.

Some of those issues included upgrades to water and gas lines that, if not done prior to the Streetscape project, would have left the road vulnerable to disrepair and eventually cost

additional taxpayer dollars.

With those upgrades recently completed, one can now see various stages of work in different areas of the Center. Phase one of the Stuyvesant Ave Streetscape project which spans Vauxhall Rd. to Morris Ave. is currently ongoing with improvements to include historic granite bands at mid-block crossings, new light poles, and new furniture which will be coming in early fall, and full reconstruction and repaving of the street taking place in the late fall. Phase two, which spans Morris Ave to the Cannon at the end of Stuyvesant Ave, is scheduled to begin in the Spring of 2018.

The beautification and upgraded infrastructure are reportedly the first steps in making Union Center more marketable to new and existing businesses; and according to Mayor Cavadas the results are already taking root.

She noted businesses that recently opened like "Norma's Flowers," "Vision Eyewear" and "Care Pharmacy;" and mentioned a host of others including the soon-to-come opening of "Kung Fu Tea," "Beauty Supply Store," "Bed, Bath and Body," "Jammed up" an expansion of "Van Gogh's Ear," and a new medical building opening across from "Stop n' Shop" on Stuyvesant Ave later on this summer.

The application from American Landmark

Developers is part of the second step in the process, geared at addressing the lack of foot traffic in the area by creating a built-in community of shoppers with a development model the likes of Cara Lofts at the intersection of Morris and Stuyvesant Avenues.

"This project is an ambitious one," said Ruben Peraza, owner of the popular ice cream spot "Magic Fountain" at a recent Planning Board meeting. "I believe in this town and believe that it's coming back to life," Peraza continued "its progress and revitalization that we need in this town."

Cara Lofts opened in 2014; its success sparked a second mixed use development across from Stop n' Shop and O'Lagar Restaurant which broke ground late last year. Both include a mix of retail and residential spaces with the second project expected to be completed this fall. The American Landmark Developers Project will utilize the same model with construction beginning late this year.

"In essence, we are creating a neighborhood downtown, where people who live in Union Center will also shop, eat and spend their leisure time there. This, combined with a new ambiance and an aggressive push for higher caliber retailers, is certain to give the Center the energy that it needs to thrive," Cavadas said.



(above) Renderings of the proposed development by American Landmark Developers starting at Terminal Mill Ends on Stuyvesant Ave and spanning 300 linear feet towards Unity Bank.

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TOWNLEY CHURCH WELCOMES NEW PASTOR

The members of Townley Presbyterian Church are pleased to welcome a new pastor. At a special congregational meeting held on Sunday, June 11, 2017, after nearly a yearlong search, Townley Presbyterian Church unanimously voted to accept Pastor Ronald Thompson as its new pastor. Pastor Ron happily agreed.

Ronald Thompson is a native of Union County, New Jersey, and resides therein. He and his wife, Vyonna, are celebrating 37 years of marriage this year. They have two adult sons, Jeremy and Steven, and are blessed with three granddaughters. Pastor Ron believes he “can do all things through Christ,” who is a source of his strength (Ephesian 4:13). He has a BS in Organizational Management from Nyack College, New York, as well as a Masters of Divinity from Cairn University, Pennsylvania (formerly Philadelphia Biblical University). His mother was instrumental in starting his early Christian training at the Greystone Presbyterian Church of Elizabeth, NJ. His religious education and spiritual formation continued at the Greater Mount Moriah Baptist Church of Linden, NJ, where he would later receive his call to ministry. Ron was ordained as an Associate Minister in 1991. He accepted the opportunity to serve as Interim Pastor and then Pastor of the Imani Temple Baptist Church of Elizabeth, NJ, serving from 2009 to 2015. Pastor Thompson’s ministry

is a blessing to our church. He and his wife, Vyonna feel that same blessing and are excited to call Townley Church their home.

Sunday services at Townley Church, 829 Salem Road, Union, NJ, are held at 10 AM. The congregation hopes you will join them on Sunday and help welcome Pastor Thompson and his wife Vyonna.



(above l-r) Vyonna Thompson and Pastor Ronald Thompson.

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UNION KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS MAKES DONATION TO ST. JUDE'S CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

On Sunday, July 16, at a festive fundraiser, the Union Knights of Columbus at the Columbian Club of Union in Union, NJ hosted a pig roast. Grand Knight Michael Willemse organized this outdoor event with the intention of donating to St. Jude's Children's Hospital.

The \$600.00 donation was a result of proceeds from the net sale of event tickets. The Grand Knight chose St. Jude's Hospital because of its mission statement to advance cures for pediatric catastrophic diseases, and for never denying a child treatment regardless of race, religion or the family's ability to pay. Since its creation in 1962,

St. Jude has become one of the world's premier pediatric research institutions.

“We are thrilled to be able to make this donation,” stated Michael, as he signed the check and handed it to Union Council's Financial Secretary Ed McCormick. “This organization has been a shining example of how our medical profession needs to continue to be; for the patient first and not a business,” continued Michael.

The Union Knights of Columbus plan to make this an annual event to further support St. Jude and all they do for children around the world.

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Union High School Class of 2017 Valedictorian Victoria Stiritz and Salutatorian Andre Marques were honored at the Annual Recognition Breakfast for Outstanding Scholars of Union County held in June. Township of Union Schools Assistant Superintendent Annie Moses, Union High School Principal Corey Lowery and Vice Principal Terrell Rutty were in attendance to support both the students and their families.

receive in their lifetime. I wish them all the best in their future endeavors.” “At this level of academic success, students are motivated by the goals they set for themselves,” said Mrs. Moses. She continued, “Our scholars’ commitment to years of academic success is something we are very proud of.”

Congratulations to the Class of 2017!

The next day, Union High School hosted The Presidential Awards Breakfast for students with a 3.5 GPA or higher. The breakfast recognized 159 students for their academic achievement throughout their high school career.

Principal Corey Lowery shared “I am very proud of the academic successes of these students. They have represented themselves and their families very well over the years. It is important for students to understand that their success is a culmination of their hard work and the support of their families. Also, it is important to remember that being a good person is more important than any other accolades they will



(above, l-r) Valedictorian Victoria Stiritz, Salutatorian Andre Marques.



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STUDENTS PRESENT INNOVATIVE MEDICAL DEVICE

Kean University computer science students Claudia Fortes of Union, Andrey Suvorov of Edison, and Peter Krivoshik of Ringoes presented at What's Next in Medical Devices, an NJ Tech Council event, on Tuesday, June 13 at Princeton University. Kean computer science professor Jenny Li, Ph.D., and her students developed LifeLine – an autonomous life-saving device – in collaboration with researchers from Carnegie Mellon University. Kean was one of only four colleges selected to present, and the only undergraduate program featured. Kean's School of Computer Science is dedicated to promoting undergraduate research, faculty and student collaboration, and applied research outcomes.

"LifeLine is an essential autonomous life-saving device that utilizes AI technology to automate health device operation without human intervention. Its uniqueness lies in its automatic detection and operation," said Li. "The tech council event provided our research and innovation with recognition from both academia and industry."

LifeLine utilizes an accelerometer with heat sensors, artificial intelligence (AI), and machine learning algorithms to detect life-threatening conditions and send alarm signals through various communication channels within milliseconds of detection. Unlike similar devices currently on the market, LifeLine automatically calls for help, increasing the speed of response without the need for patient action.

"The work that went into creating LifeLine in anticipation for the NJ Tech Council's event was tireless and stretched all of our combined expertise to the limits," said Krivoshik.

The NJ Tech Council provides business development, education, networking and recognition opportunities as well as advocacy for the state's technology businesses. Founded in 1996, the council is a private, nonprofit membership organization, which supports technology, innovation, and entrepreneurship across the state and region. Each May, the Tech Council hosts the HealthTech Conference, which highlights how technology is transforming the healthcare industry. Events like What's Next in

Medical Devices help to nurture the technology, and aide the STEM talent pipeline – both of which are critical to the continued growth of industry in New Jersey.



(above l-r) Andrey Suvorov, Jenny Li, Claudia Fortes and Peter Krivoshik recently presented their research at the NJ Tech Council's What's Next in Medical Devices event.

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SHOPRITE OF UNION PRESENTS:

Summer Salads

Monday, August 7 at 7pm

Join Justine from Shoprite to learn about delicious summer produce. Recipes and samples available.

SEARCH FOR YOUR UNCLAIMED PROPERTY

Wednesday, August 9 at 3pm

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TECH SUPPORT

Thursday, August 10 from 11am-1pm

Monday, August 14 from 1-3pm

Bring your own device and our tech savvy teens will give you the hands on support. Sign up required.

LUNCHTIME MEDITATION

Thursday August 10, 17, 24 and 31

from 11:30am to 12:30pm

We will learn to de-stress, relax, and explore the workings of our minds. No experience necessary.

QUELLO MUSIC CONCERTS

Thursday, August 10 at 1pm

Introducing Quello Concerts. This month's feature is Judy Garland, Frank Sinatra, and Dean Martin.

WRAPPED IN LOVE KNITTING GROUP

Monday, August 14 from 6:30-8pm

Love to knit or crochet? Always wanted to learn how? Bring your own material or we can get you started.

BOARD GAMES FOR ADULTS

Wednesday, August 16 at 4pm

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INTERNATIONAL FILM

Thursday, August 24 at 2pm

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Monday August 7 at 6pm

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DIY HOMEMADE WREATH

Monday, August 14 at 1:30pm

Creativity doesn't have an age limit. This craft can be used to decorate your space. Sign up required.

COLOR YOURSELF HAPPY: ADULT COLORING NIGHT

Monday, August 21 at 5pm

Join us for a stress-relieving evening of coloring! Coloring pages and colored pencils will be provided.

AFTERNOON PRIZE BINGO FOR ADULTS

Monday, August 28 at 1:30pm

Join us for a fun afternoon of BINGO. Meet new friends and win some cool prizes. Sign up required.

JERSEY JOB CLUB

Monday, August 28 at 7pm

Pathways to Employment – "Starting Your Job Search" with Career Coach Deb Warner.

IMAGINE WELCOMES NEW VOLUNTEERS

On July 7-10th for 32-hours 16 new volunteers were trained to take on a year-long commitment at Imagine, A Center for Coping with Loss as volunteer facilitators. The training is delivered by Imagine clinical staff who model how to provide support using mirroring and reflection and by immersing the volunteers in the experience of a support group. "The training was so rich and gave me a true sense of how to facilitate as well as the value in the work we do," said one newly trained facilitator, Maria Mujica.

"Volunteers are the heart and soul of Imagine and we could not be more grateful to all of the people who take on this commitment," said Mary Robinson, Imagine Executive Director.

"Since moving into our new space (244 Sheffield St., Mountainside, NJ) we have grown quickly as anticipated," said Mandi Zucker, Imagine's Program Director. "These new

volunteers mean we can start a fifth Night of Support in September serving 60 additional children and adults without having to place anyone on a waiting list. We now provide support groups on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays, offering more choices and flexibility to the participants that need it."

Imagine offers free year-round grief support groups for people ages 3-30 as well as parents/guardians of the children who have had a parent or sibling die, and for people coping with a family member with a terminal or chronic illness. Support groups meet on weekday nights for an hour and a half. Dinner is provided prior to the group meeting.

To schedule an orientation for yourself or your family, or for more information about volunteering, please contact Imagine at 908-264-3100 or info@imagineenj.org.



(above, back row) Kathy Vergel (Westfield), Nina Carnavale (Caldwell), Florence Wilcox (Watchung), Meredith Stick (Westfield), Remy Davis (Basking Ridge), Monica Rodriguez (Union), Alayne Morgenthal (Westfield), Beth Rakin (Warren). (front row) Kathy Dulan (Westfield), Elizabeth Savnik (Bound Brook), Mandi Zucker (Westfield), Dorothy Jean Jones (Piscataway), Juliann Satz (North Brunswick), Jacqueline Miller (North Plainfield), Anna Berman (Warren), Veronica Ortiz (North Plainfield), Mackenzie Kuhl (Westfield), Maria Mujica (Union).

2017 UNION FARMERS' MARKET

A grand opening ceremony for the 2017 Union Farmers' Market was held on June 22nd. The market will be taking place on Thursdays in the front parking lot of the Township of Union Municipal Building at 1976 Morris Ave. from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. through September 28th.

The Union Farmers' Market, which made its debut last summer, is a place where local businesses can provide fresh and honest products to the residents of the Township of Union and the greater area.

Patrons of the market will be able to shop from a variety of vendors, including organic produce, natural beauty products, diverse cuisine and more! The full list of vendors are as followed: Circle Brook Farm, Natural Pizazz, Deliciously Alicia, Tropical Taste Cuisine, El Lechon de Negrón, Maltese Munchies, Ido's Fishing Sauces, Gusti Di Sicilia, Jersey Buzz, The Lab Food Truck and Empanada Guy.

The Township of Union will also be providing live jazz music each week alongside featured businesses from the area, courtesy of the Special Improvement District.

To learn more about the Union Farmers' Market, please visit uniontwpfarmersmarket.com and like their facebook page, [facebook.com/uniontwpfarmersmarket](https://www.facebook.com/uniontwpfarmersmarket).



(above) Residents patronizing Chef Ido's Finishing Sauces at the Township of Union Farmers' Market. The Market, which made its debut last summer, is a place where local businesses can provide fresh and honest products to the residents of the Township of Union and the greater area. It will take place every Thursday from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. now through Sept 28th.

KAWAMEEH'S TRIBE GOES "ALL IN"

Submitted by: Lisa Bergamotto

On Thursday, June 15th, Kawameeh Middle School students attended an assembly provided by the School Counseling Department in conjunction with the Municipal Drug Alliance in which students heard motivational speaker Gian Paul Gonzalez talk about being "All In". This is a phrase that has become popularized over the past few years as Gonzalez has talked to several sports teams, including the New York Giants, various corporate companies, including WalMart, and visited several schools throughout the area. His main message is that everything you are doing should be one hundred percent and you should try your hardest at everything despite mistakes or obstacles along the way.

The assembly addressed various topics including doing your best not only in school but in daily life. Students enjoyed listening to Gian Paul as he illustrated his point by telling them stories of his experiences growing up, including being drafted for the NBA. He said, "being all in

isn't about the time you have but what you do with the time you put in. Even if it's only five minutes a day." He explained that there will always be excuses or people to blame but ultimately it is up to you to be all in. One student stated, "I learned that when I start something I need to finish it. Like I thought about quitting soccer but then I realized how far my team had made it so I decided to finish out the season with them."

It is the hope of the staff and administration that the assembly will not only encourage students to try their best but also to avoid missteps such as illegal drug and alcohol use. In the event that students do stumble, Gian Paul reminds the students that, "You can make a mistake, but you being born is never a mistake," and to refocus on what is important to them. It is important for the youth in schools to understand that although they are constantly exposed to drugs and alcohol that this is not the route to

chose and they can be as successful as they chose in life if they avoid these negative influences.

In addition to the regular assembly that was presented to all students, chosen seventh grade students participated in a small leadership session in which students discussed the importance of being a leader in addition to the hardships that may come with such a position. He explained that it is not always easy to do the right thing and expect others to follow but to stay committed to what is important and proceed down the path which is of interest to them.

Overall, the assembly was a success, not only stressing the importance of avoiding drug and alcohol use but also by motivating the students in other areas of their lives. Additionally, many of the staff members felt moved by the stories and lessons provided and are hoping to incorporate Gian Paul's "All In" into their classrooms during the next school year.



(above) Kawameeh Middle School 8th graders with the guest speaker, Gian Paul Gonzalez.

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The Lacerda family is living proof that life can change in an instant.

In May 2016, Christina and Michael Lacerda, and their daughter, experienced a life-shattering event: 39-year-old Mike suffered a ruptured brain aneurysm, followed by three strokes. The young dad survived, but was left incapacitated, and unable to work, drive, or take care of himself.

The tragedy has also left the family financially devastated. They are struggling to pay \$2400 a month for Cobra coverage for Mike's therapy, prescriptions, and doctors' visits.

They are also in jeopardy of losing their home, and cannot afford it on one salary. The Lacerda family has wiped out all of their savings for medical bills. Meanwhile, they are still waiting to hear if Mike is eligible for disability.

KICK OFF TO MAYOR'S WEEKEND IS SET AS UNION TOWNSHIP CHAMBER'S AUGUST NETWORKING EVENT

Come celebrate with the Union Township Chamber of Commerce and the Union Center Business District for the Chamber's Annual "Kick Off to Mayor's Weekend!" on Wednesday, August 23, 2016, from 5-7 p.m. at The AVE of Union, 1070 Morris Avenue, Union, NJ.

The event will honor this year's sponsors, highlight the cause for 2017 and encourage community participation. The Mayor's Weekend is comprised of the "Welcome Fall Festival on Saturday, Sept. 23 and the Union Chamber's 7th Annual 5k Run on Sunday, September 24.

"This event features a fun way to honor our Event Sponsor, Shake A Paw Rescue and Adoption Center and all of our sponsors," said Chamber CEO James Masterson. "This is an

enjoyable event that celebrates an important and worthy community undertaking. We are grateful to everyone who is working to make this a success."

He added that a portion of the proceeds from this year's event will go to assist the Lacerda family of Union.

Admission is free, but pre-registration is required. Contact the Chamber to register at (908) 688-2777 or email: executivedirector@unionchamber.com.

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