

LIFE *in* LINDEN

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Distributed as a community service by the Linden Chamber of Commerce.

Issue 97 • March 2018

PRINCIPAL ATIYA PERKINS HONORED BY HER HOMETOWN

Submitted by Gary Miller

After a 45-minute ride up from Hamilton, New Jersey, the northbound NJ Transit train pulls into Linden station around 7 a.m. This is where Atiya Perkins begins the final leg of her daily commute, walking the familiar streets of her hometown.

She walks down South Wood Avenue for about a mile, through the neighborhood where many of her students live, to begin her day as principal of School No. 2.

Linden – the schools, the city, and its streets – are a vital part of what made Perkins who she is today. She attended Schools No. 4, 5, and 9, and McManus Middle School, and graduated Linden High School with the class of 1991.

She was raised by her father after her mother died when she was a baby, and things weren't always easy for the family. But she took inspiration from watching her father attend community college despite struggling with epilepsy. She developed a reverence for education and a drive to build a better life for her and her family. She also found her love for walking because her father couldn't drive.

"It's part of who I am, because of the lack that we had," Perkins said. "I tried to help my dad, and I learned that I can't look back because there was nothing back there. The only thing is for me is to look forward. And I need to have more, I needed to contribute."

Her father is now gone, too, but she is still driven to contribute in her calling as an educator. Perkins instills in her students the lesson that education is the key to whatever they want to be in life, and she is continuing her own studies with the goal of attaining her doctorate and authoring children's books.

"One of my favorite quotes that I use all the time is by Nelson Mandela: 'Education is the most powerful weapon used to change the world,'" she said. "I truly live by that, because it is so valuable."

Because of her deep roots in Linden and her inspirational work in the Linden Public Schools, Perkins has been chosen as this year's Black History Month honoree by the City of



(above) Atiya Perkins

Linden. She was honored at the city's Black History Celebration on Feb. 15, 6 p.m., at the Linden Multipurpose Center.

"She leaves an impression on me and other parents in the district that she has a sincere love for her job and the families she serves," said Councilwoman Rhashonna C. Cosby, founder, and organizer of the seventh annual event. "Educators are often not recognized for all that they do; however, they are one of the most vital components in the community. As an administrator, Mrs. Perkins has brought positive and impactful initiatives to the schools."

After graduating from LHS, Perkins earned her bachelor's degree in elementary education and psychology from Seton Hall University, where she also earned her master's degree in education leadership.

She has worked in Linden Public Schools for 14 years, starting as a substitute teacher, then serving as a fourth-grade teacher, vice principal at Schools No. 1 and 4 and McManus Middle School, principal at School No. 6 – and now in her second school year as principal at School No. 2.

Perkins said she is humbled by the Black History Month honor, but that it also makes her hopeful because she is being held up for her academic achievements and work as an educator.

"In the African-American community, children look at athleticism as

(Continued on page 2)

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Life in Linden is published by Renna Media in cooperation with the Linden Chamber of Commerce, an affiliate of the Gateway Regional Chamber of Commerce.

12,500 newspapers are printed monthly. 11,800 are mailed to homes and businesses and the remainder are distributed free at distribution sites throughout Linden.

Although great care has been taken to ensure the information contained within is accurate, Linden Chamber of Commerce assumes no liability for errors or omissions.

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ATIYA PERKINS HONORED (CONTINUED)

a goal," she said. "'When I grow up I want to be a basketball player,' or 'I want to be a football player.' And you don't hear much about the academic component. So, I'm grateful to be able to see growth in using education as a strength – using the brain muscle."

Perkins said it is important for young African-Americans to have role models to look up to because race is still at the forefront of many conversations.

"There are so many different talents and abilities out there and, I'm sorry to say it, but sometimes race supersedes that," she said. "So, to have a young girl say to me, 'I want to be like you when I grow up' because they are able to identify with me first because of my race, I'm thankful. Then that gives me the opportunity to go a little bit deeper. I'm thankful to be in an environment where people get to see beyond race. You get to see a full person. If I can inspire anyone, especially within the African-American community, it's to definitely understand the importance of getting your education. You need it. This world needs it."

Superintendent Danny A. Robertozzi said Perkins should be proud of all her achievements, and that she is an inspiration to her students and colleagues.

"Mrs. Perkins has filled so many key roles in her career in Linden," he said. "It's wonderful

that her students can see someone who came from Linden and rose to be such a tremendous role model for the power of education. The City of Linden couldn't have made a better choice in selecting this year's Black History Month honoree."

Over her career, Perkins established a multicultural event at School No. 1, helped School No. 4 receive a character education grant, and helped implement the "Leader in Me" program at School No. 6.

At School No. 2 she has established a public speaking club for third- through fifth-graders, a book club and blog, and the "Fathers Matter, Too" initiative. The first session of the latter saw over 300 fathers come to the school for a morning visit meant to emphasize how important fathers are to their children's success in school.

Perkins sits on the board of directors as the education specialist for InspiHER, a non-profit with a mission to heal, empower and restore the image of young girls through self-exploration, education, and mentorship.

"We take this whole month for Black History Month, and what does that mean? It means that we're talking about people who have impacted our history," Perkins said.

"And I'm elated to be a part of making history for someone."

SPRINGFEST! SATURDAY, MARCH 24, 2018

Winter is coming to an end and that can mean only one thing – it's time for Bayern Verein Newark's SpringFest!

In Germany, Munich's Fruehlingsfest (Springfest in English) is the sister event to the city's legendary beer festival held later in the year. The festival welcomes thousands of people to the Bavarian capital for more than two weeks of traditional celebration.

And just like in Munich, our German festival will welcome Spring, complete with German cuisine, pretzels, beer, wine, music by Bernie's Orchestra, as well as our own traditional German Schuhplattlers and Folkdancers in Lederhosen

and Dirndls – all in a Festhalle right in Kenilworth, NJ!

Join us in kicking off the season on Saturday, March 24, 2018 at the Kenilworth Veteran's Center, 33 South 21st Street, Kenilworth, NJ at 6 p.m. Admission: \$35 per person, \$10 Children ages 6-16 years; Under 6 years – Free, and includes a hot food platter, dessert and tea/coffee as well as imported and domestic beer, wine, soda and water throughout the evening.

For More Information contact Ralph Ehmann at (908) 265-1602 or ehmannr@aol.com or Betty Bunker at (732) 463-7855 or embunker@gmail.com.

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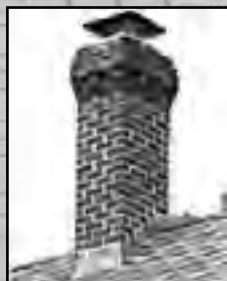
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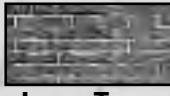
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YMCA HOLDING SUMMER DAY CAMP OPEN HOUSES IN MARCH AND APRIL

The Gateway Family YMCA is gearing up for a summer of fun with the theme, "Where Adventure Begins," and is inviting the public to learn more about summer camp at an open house this spring. Summer camp open house dates are scheduled for March 21, 6 to 8 p.m.; April 21, noon to 3 p.m.; and May 15, 6 to 8 p.m. Summer day camp is available at the Elizabeth Branch, 135 Madison Avenue, Elizabeth, New Jersey; Five Points Branch, 201 Tucker Avenue, Union, New Jersey; and Rahway Branch, 1564 Irving Street, Rahway, New Jersey.

The Gateway Family YMCA offers summer day camp experiences for preschool through grade 11. And, to ensure that all youth have the

chance to experience camp, The Gateway Family YMCA offers financial assistance to those in need, as well as a multi-sibling rate for families. Summer camp at The Gateway Family YMCA gives kids and teens an adventurous, active, and healthy summer that challenges their minds and feeds their spirit.

YMCA camp programs offer youth fun and unique experiences with an opportunity to explore the outdoors, meet new friends, discover new interests and create memories that last a lifetime. Attending an open house is a first step in selecting a summer camp experience that complements your child and their interests. Optional specialty camp experiences include sports camps, arts camp, dance camp and swim camp along with opportunities to meet your child's unique skills and interests.

Summer is the ideal time for kids to get up, get out and explore the world around them. But, for some kids, summer means no access to recreational and educational activities to help them learn, grow, and thrive during out-of-school time. As a result, some kids can experience summer learning loss and gain weight twice as fast than during the school year. Attending summer camp at The Gateway Family YMCA is a memorable opportunity for kids to keep their minds and bodies active throughout the summer months.

"Attending summer day camp at the Y is a growth experience that every child should have an opportunity to experience. Our YMCA is dedicated to providing assistance to those in need in our community," says Krystal R. Canady, CEO of The Gateway Family YMCA.



"In our day camp, kids are in a welcoming environment with caring role models, where they can belong, build relationships, develop character, discover their potential and achieve personal goals. We encourage parents to give their kids the experience of summer camp so that every child can benefit from the unique and beneficial activities," added Melynda A. Mileski, EVP/COO.

A leading nonprofit committed to nurturing the potential of youth, the Y has been a leader in providing summer camp for nearly 130 years. The Gateway Family YMCA continues to give youth an enriching, safe experience with caring staff and volunteers who model positive values that help build their kids' character. Through summer camp, the Y is helping to combat childhood obesity, summer learning loss and food insecurity.

For more information, visit tgfymca.org/day-camp or contact The Gateway Family YMCA Elizabeth Branch 908-355-9622, Five Points Branch 908-688-9622, or Rahway Branch 732-388-0057.

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LINDEN EDUCATORS GET A FRESH LOOK AT TOP TEACHING TECHNIQUES

Submitted by Gary Miller

Teachers and administrators from throughout Linden Public Schools gathered for professional development sessions on January 12, 2018, with visiting education consultant Stefani Hite.

Hite, a former teacher, and administrator, discussed studies by Australian researcher John Hattie, who seeks to quantify what classroom strategies work best to increase student performance.

“His philosophy is, ‘Know they impact,’” Hite told a group of administrators gathered at the district’s Professional Development Resource Center. “It’s fine that we show up in school every day and we work with kids, but in the end, we’ve got to know that what we’re doing is actually impacting the students in the way that we want it to.”

Hite met with the administrators in the morning, then with teachers who are members of the district’s Instructional Leadership Teams in the afternoon at School No. 1. The ILTs consist of about 100 teachers who receive professional development on data analysis and instructional strategies and pass the information on to the rest of the staff.

Reina Irizarry-Clark, an instructional coach for Linden, said Hite’s goal was to take Hattie’s research and show teachers how it translates into classroom technique, and to show administrators how to support teachers in implementing those strategies.

One key strategy she discussed was offering students specific feedback on how to improve their performance.

“So instead of saying, ‘Oh, good job,’ we tell the child what they need to work on,” Irizarry-Clark said. “It is about giving them specific guidance on the things they can do to increase their performance in the classroom.”

“It’s one of those things that teachers have always done, but what the research suggests is that certain influences, such as feedback, have a higher impact on student achievement than others. We are learning what those influences are and how they translate into the classroom.”

It’s not like we need to reinvent the wheel.”

She said offering very specific feedback is good for student of all achievement levels.

“It doesn’t just benefit your struggling students,” Irizarry-Clark said. “It’s also beneficial for your higher-level students because you want to take them to the next level, you want to enrich them. You don’t want to just say they’re okay, they’re performing well. You want to provide them with the next steps, specific feedback in relation to the learning objective, to help that child achieve even more.”

In her morning session, Hite asked administrators to gather in small groups to rank what effect different classroom approaches would have on student learning.

“The important thing is not whether you get this right or wrong,” Hite told them. “The important thing is to have conversations about it.”

That fits in with what Irizarry-Clark said is a

key to Linden’s Instructional Leadership Team approach.

“It’s not so much of a top-down approach, but it’s really a collaborative approach where everyone’s working together to say, ‘What are those things that we can do to make sure that we are achieving our mission?’” she said.

Hite’s sessions in Linden were made possible by the New Jersey Education Association, which has designated Linden as a model district in its Priority Schools Initiative. In exchange for Linden’s acting as a model to help other school districts boost their performance, the NJEA pays for additional professional development sessions for Linden’s educators.

Irizarry-Clark said sessions like Hite’s help rejuvenate Linden’s teachers.

“Sometimes you just have to take a step back to reassess what you’re doing,” she said. “You see you already do this in the classroom, but you say, ‘What else can I do with this technique?’”



(above, l-r) Antoinette Modrak, coordinator of special projects; William Mastriano, principal of School No. 6; Stefani Hite; Suzanne Olivero, vice principal of School No. 4; Anthony Cataline, principal of School No. 4; and Sandra Coglianese, principal of School No. 10.



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UNION COUNTY CLERK JOANNE RAJOPPI TO BE PRESENTED WITH “WOMEN IN AMERICAN HISTORY” AWARD

March is Women's History month and the Crane's Ford Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) chapter will be presenting Joanne Rajoppi, Union County Clerk, with the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution "Women in American History" award on Saturday, March 10, 2018, at noon at the Cranford Community Center, 220 Walnut Avenue, Cranford, NJ.

The "Women in American History" award, sponsored by the NSDAR, is designed to recognize worthy women, and celebrate their contribution to history, culture, and society.

Joanne Rajoppi is the first woman County clerk in the 154-year history of Union County.



(above) Joanne Rajoppi, Union County Clerk

LIBRARY CELEBRATES FAMOUS WOMEN FROM UNION COUNTY

The Linden Public Library is proud to sponsor a discussion by John Prescott of the Union County Office of Cultural and Heritage Affairs. Prescott will talk about the important contributions made by famous women such as Zora Neale Hurston, Meryl Streep, Judy Blume, and Carol Blazejowski, all of whom called Union County home during their lives.

The hour-long talk will be held on Monday, March 26, 2018, at 3:30 p.m. in the Columbia Bank Room of the Linden Public Library.

All are welcome for this event. The library has free, off-street parking. Light refreshments will be served and provided by the Friends of the Linden Library. Founded in 1928, the Library celebrates its 90th anniversary in 2018.

READ ACROSS AMERICA DAY

Join the Linden Library on Monday March 5, 2018, 3:30 p.m. for Read Across America Day. There will be a celebration of the birthday of Dr. Seuss with guest readers sharing some of his stories and a special appearance by The Cat in the Hat. The program is hosted by the Friends of Linden Library.

She is the former Mayor of Springfield, former Union County Freeholder and first woman chairman of the Freeholder Board, and former NJ Assistant Secretary of State during the Byrne Administration. She has been an advocate for women running for public office, writing her first book, "Women in Office: Getting There and Staying There" in 1993.

As an author, her first book published in 2013 chronicled the military service of her great-grandfather during the American Civil War titled "New Brunswick and the Civil War: The Brunswick Boys in the Great Rebellion" letters he wrote to his family. She followed the story with the Hamilton women after the war writing her most recent book: "Northern Women in the Aftermath of the Civil War: The Wives and Daughters of the Brunswick Boys." This book

was published in 2017. Ms. Rajoppi will be presenting a power-point program on her most recent book and copies of the book will be available for purchase.

The public is invited to join us for the presentation with a reception to follow. The Crane's Ford chapter will also be celebrating its 74th Anniversary, chartered on March 8, 1944.

The NSDAR is a volunteer women's service organization dedicated to promoting patriotism, historic preservation, service to veterans and meaningful community service. Membership is open to any woman 18 years or older who can prove lineal descent from an ancestor who aided in achieving American Independence. For more information or DAR application please contact our chapter Registrar, Patricia Campanelli at patushkat@aol.com

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH FILMS AT LIBRARY

Women's History Month is celebrated internationally each March.

The Linden Public Library, 31 East Henry Street, Linden, New Jersey, proudly presents a series of films portraying women in a variety of positive female roles throughout history, both in fact and fiction. Please join us as these films will be presented free of charge in the Columbia Bank Room at 1 p.m.

MARCH 9: "THE ZOOKEEPER'S WIFE" (2017), PG-13; 127 MINUTES.

Based on a true story, this film is set in Warsaw in 1939. World War II begins and Poland is overtaken by the Nazis. Antonina Zabinski (Jessica Chastain) and her husband, Dr. Jan Zabinski (Johan Heldenbergh) run the Warsaw Zoo. It flourishes under Jan's stewardship and Antonina's care. Jan and Antonina are forced to report to the Third Reich's newly appointed chief zoologist, Lutz Heck (Daniel Brühl). The Zabinskis covertly begin working with the Resistance and put plans into action to save the lives of hundreds of Jews from what has become the Warsaw Ghetto.

MARCH 16: "WAITRESS" (2007), PG-13; 108 MINUTES.

Jenna (Keri Russell) works as a waitress in a diner in a small Southern town and is a genius at creating luscious desserts. Her marriage to an overbearing lout (Jeremy Sisto) makes happiness impossible. When she discovers she is pregnant, she plans to skip town before her condition becomes obvious. However, she

begins an affair with the town's new doctor (Nathan Fillion), who is the only one who knows her secret. The film was the basis for the hit Broadway musical from 2015.

MARCH 23: "A QUIET PASSION" (2016), PG-13; 125 MINUTES.

Featuring award-winning actress Cynthia Nixon in the lead role, this film tells the story of American poet Emily Dickinson for her early days as a New England schoolgirl to her later years as a reclusive, undiscovered talented artist. As she maintains close ties with her family throughout her life, Dickinson is completely uninterested in fame as she becomes a prolific poet and disciplined writer, whose work was largely unrecognized until after her death in 1886 at age 55.

MARCH 29: "DOWN WITH LOVE" (2003), PG-13; 101 MINUTES.

In 1962, feminist Barbara Novak (Renée Zellweger) pens a best-selling book that details the drawbacks of love. She encourages women to forgo serious relationships with men in favor of independence, workplace achievements and satisfying sex. Despite her success, many men are taken aback by her progressive views, including slick writer Catcher Block (Ewan McGregor), who decides to expose Barbara as a fraud by making her fall in love with him. However, his plan has unexpected consequences in this hit romantic comedy.

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The local I9 Sports programs are held in Nomahegan Park in Cranford, and Rutgers Avenue Park and The Patrick School in Hillside. The Spring season includes a Baseball Instructional Program on Sundays from 3pm - 6pm for boys and girls ages 3 - 6. Flag Football Instructional Program on Sundays for boys and girls ages 4 - 10; and a Soccer League on Sundays for boys and girls ages 3 - 10.

Registration can be done online at i9sports.com or by calling 908-212-3200.




Photos from I9 2017 season can be found online on the Cranford Monthly page on rennamedia.com and on the Cranford Monthly page on [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/cranfordmonthly).



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SEWING & QUILTING MEETUP GROUP FORMING IN RAHWAY

Area residents who enjoy sewing and quilting, and those who would like to start, are invited to join the newly formed Rahway Sewing & Quilting Meetup group.

Members are encouraged to share their interests, tips and techniques, and just sewcialize with others who share their passion for creating with fabric. "Whether you enjoy making quilts, home dec pieces, gifts, clothing, accessories, or a little bit of everything, this is a group where you can show off your latest masterpiece, get help with a difficult project, exchange information and have some fun," says Lisa Shepard Stewart, organizer of the group and a lifelong fabric collector and sewing/quilting enthusiast.

An introductory meeting was held in February; the next one is scheduled for Sunday, March 18, 2018, from 2 p.m. – 4 p.m. at the

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Cultured Expressions Studio, 1417 Main Street, Rahway, NJ. For complete details, and to RSVP for the March meetup, go to www.meetup.com, search for "Rahway Sewing & Quilting Meetup" and join the group. It's free to sign up and participate in the group, though there may be a fee for some upcoming activities and events.

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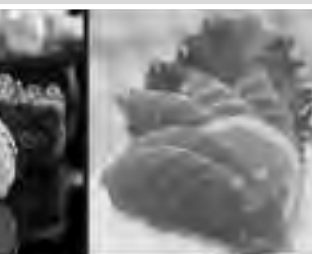
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IRS WARNS OF SCAMS TARGETING TAXPAYERS

The IRS is urging the public to be aware of suspicious individuals claiming to be from the IRS. The IRS doesn't initiate contact with taxpayers by email, text messages, or social media channels to request personal or financial information. Recognize the telltale signs of a scam.

SCAMS TARGETING TAXPAYERS

IRS-IMPERSONATION TELEPHONE SCAMS

A sophisticated phone scam targeting taxpayers, including recent immigrants, has been making the rounds throughout the country. Callers claim to be IRS employees, using fake names and bogus IRS identification badge numbers. They may know a lot about their targets, and they usually alter the caller ID to make it look like the IRS is calling.

Victims are told they owe money to the IRS and it must be paid promptly through a gift card or wire transfer. Victims may be threatened with arrest, deportation or suspension of a business or driver's license. In many cases, the caller becomes hostile and insulting. Victims may be told they have a refund due to try to trick them into sharing private information. If the phone isn't answered, the scammers often leave an "urgent" callback request.

Some thieves have used video relay services (VRS) to try to scam deaf and hard of hearing individuals. Taxpayers are urged not trust calls just because they are made through VRS, as interpreters don't screen calls for validity.

Limited English Proficiency victims are often approached in their native language, threatened with deportation, police arrest and license revocation, among other things. IRS urges all taxpayers caution before paying unexpected tax bills. Note that the IRS doesn't:

- Call to demand immediate payment using a specific payment method such as a prepaid debit card, gift card or wire transfer. Generally, the IRS will first mail you a bill if you owe any taxes.
- Threaten to bring in local police or other law-enforcement groups to have you arrested for not paying.
- Demand payment without giving you the opportunity to question or appeal the amount

they say you owe.

- Ask for credit or debit card numbers over the phone.

SCAMS TARGETING TAX PROFESSIONALS

Increasingly, tax professionals are being targeted by identity thieves. These criminals – many of them sophisticated, organized syndicates – are redoubling their efforts to gather personal data to file fraudulent federal and state income tax returns.

SURGE IN EMAIL, PHISHING AND MALWARE SCHEMES

Phishing (as in "fishing for information") is a scam where fraudsters send e-mail messages to trick unsuspecting victims into revealing personal and financial information that can be used to steal the victims' identity.

The IRS has issued several alerts about the fraudulent use of the IRS name or logo by scammers trying to gain access to consumers' financial information to steal their identity and assets.

Scam emails are designed to trick taxpayers into thinking these are official communications from the IRS or others in the tax industry, including tax software companies. These phishing schemes may seek information related to refunds, filing status, confirming personal information, ordering transcripts, and verifying PIN information.

Be alert to bogus emails that appear to come from your tax professional, requesting information for an IRS form. IRS doesn't require Life Insurance and Annuity updates from taxpayers or a tax professional.

Variations can be seen via text messages. The IRS is aware of email phishing scams that include links to bogus web sites intended to mirror the official IRS web site. These emails contain the direction "you are to update your IRS e-file immediately." These emails are not from the IRS.

The sites may ask for information used to file false tax returns or they may carry malware, which can infect computers.

For more details, visit irs.gov; YouTube IRS Videos on Tax Scams.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact your local police department.

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LINDEN SCHOOL'S 'DUCT TAPE THE PRINCIPAL' FUNDRAISER

Submitted by Gary Miller

School No. 6 Principal William Mastriano was able to defy gravity, with a little help from hundreds of pieces of duct tape.

The Linden school's "Duct Tape the Principal" fundraiser held on January 26, 2018, was a great success, both in terms in money raised and fun for students and staff. Students paid \$1 for a strip



(above, l-r) School No. 6 Principal William Mastriano, duct-taped to a wall with students: first-grader Francisco Flores, first-grader Ethan Melendez, second-grader Patryk Bator, first-grader Dominick Skwirz and second-grader Alexia Gutierrez.

of tape to help stick Mastriano to a wall in the gym. The effort raised over \$600 for the school's Leader in Me initiative, which teaches leadership and life skills to students and creates a culture of student empowerment based on the idea that every child can be a leader.

"Our 'Duct Tape the Principal' fundraiser far exceeded our expectations," Mastriano said. "We are so lucky to have Dr. [Danny] Robertozzi and the Board of Education for believing in events like this. It was exciting and energetic. You could really feel the support and school spirit."

Superintendent Danny A. Robertozzi gave credit to the School No. 6 staff members for their creativity and to Mastriano for being a good sport.

"This shows that Mr. Mastriano will literally go to the wall for his students," Robertozzi said. "An event like this is a win-win because it brings the school community together for an afternoon of fun, and the funds raised will mean a lot down the road by teaching the children leadership skills that will pay dividends for a lifetime."

Despite being a little warm and sore, Mastriano remained upbeat throughout his time on the wall. At a midway point, staff took away his footstool to see if he would stick; and he did. But as he slowly sank, the staff could no longer fit the stool under his feet. So a lower step was put under his feet as the activity continued.

"After the first few groups of students, I felt great, no problems at all," Mastriano said. "As time went on and the layers of tape began to accumulate, I started to get a little warm and feel stiff in my joints.

"Even though I was getting hot, I never thought about stopping. The smiles on the kids' faces, having them involved, and raising money for them made it all worth it. It also helped that I had a stool to stand on, some of the time, and

plenty of water."

Grade levels were called up one by one in random order, and students lined up to put their strips of tape on their principal. Linden Councilman John Roman attended the event, donating \$50 to the fundraiser and giving student more opportunities to apply the sticky stuff.

After the last strip of tape was placed and photos were snapped. Mastriano managed to break his way away from the wall, with a little help.

"I knew that there would be duct tape, but I never imagined there would be so much of it," Mastriano said. "Over six hundred pieces. That's a lot of tape!"

Pro Tapes and Specialties of North Brunswick, which employs Christie Krupski, mother of pre-K student Brian Krupski, donated the tape.

Students in the Leader in Me program will now implement plans for using the money that was raised. One initiative is to decorate the school's halls with leadership themes. For example, one hallway will be redone with community leaders, one with African-American leaders.

"We will allow the kids to create a budget, plan and implement what they want the hall of leaders to look like," said fourth-grade teacher Melissa Higgins, one of the coordinators of the program. "They will then purchase the materials needed and with the help of staff, transform the hallway."

Mastriano praised both the leadership program and the fundraiser.

"We really enjoy these internal fundraisers," he said. "It means so much to our school and our learning community. Seeing students, families, and staff members come together for this event is heart-warming. It helps us strengthen relationships and shows the students that sometimes it's all about having some fun!"

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(above) Principal William Mastriano was duct-taped to a wall.

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In February 2018 Quentin Morales admitted to robbing at least six banks in Union, Hudson, and Passaic Counties.



(above, l-r) Special Agent in Charge (SAC) Timothy Gallagher and Detective/Sargant. Jeffrey Carhart.

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ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS MARCH EVENTS

Are you feeling stressed and alone in trying to cope with the effects of a loved one's mental health illness? Join our peer led group monthly meetings and gain insight from others facing similar challenges. NAMI hold their Union County Family Support Group Meetings the third Tuesday of every month. The next meeting will be held Tuesday, March 20, 7:30 to 9 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church of Cranford, 11 Springfield Avenue, Cranford, New Jersey. For more information, call 908-233-1628 or email namiunioncounty@yahoo.com.

Free Course on Mental Illness. The NAMI Family-to-Family Education Program begins on Thursday evening, March 22. Presented by the Union County Chapter of NAMI, the course meets 7 to 9:30 p.m. on Thursday evenings, over a consecutive 12-week period. Course ends on May 31. It is free-of-charge, with all necessary materials furnished at no cost.

The course is offered specifically to the parents, siblings, spouses, teen-age and adult children, and significant others of individuals with severe and persistent mental illness. In a confidential setting, loved ones will learn how to understand and support their ill relative while maintaining their own well-being. The program is not appropriate for individuals who, themselves, suffer from one of the major mental disorders. The course is taught by NAMI members who have completed intensive training. Curriculum topics include schizophrenia,

bipolar disorder (manic depression), clinical depression, panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and others, the clinical treatment of these illnesses, and how caregivers can learn to cope more effectively. Attendees will learn about the biology of the brain, new research, medications, skills needed to successfully communicate with a relative, and how to deal with critical periods. Other topics include advocacy, fighting stigma and problem solving.

Classes will meet at St. Agnes Church, 332 Madison Hill Road, Clark, New Jersey. Registration is required prior to the beginning of the course. Call Pat at 732-382-0762 or email patroman2@aol.com. Please include in the subject line: F2F class. A F2F teacher will contact you with the details. Refreshments will be served.

Understanding New Perspectives on Mental Health Diagnoses. The Union County NAMI invites the public to hear a presentation by Anne Lopez, Director of Community Education/Outreach with the Mental Health Association of New Jersey. Her goal and mission is to empower families and individuals living with a mental health diagnosis or substance abuse through education and support. The presentation will be held Tuesday, March 27, at 7:30 p.m. at RWJ Rahway Fitness and Wellness Center, 2120 Lamberts Mill Road, Scotch Plains, New Jersey. For more information, call 908-233-1628 or email namiunioncounty@yahoo.com.

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For More Information, call

The Dept. of Public Property at

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LAUNCH TRAMPOLINE PARK OPENS IN LINDEN

Fifteen-year NFL veteran Ty Law joined the Linden Chamber of Commerce, Linden elected officials, and Launch Trampoline Park management and staff at the entertainment center's grand opening held on February 10, 2018.

Launch Trampoline Park, located at 1601 West

Edgar Road, Linden, NJ combines the thrill of an extreme sport and the exercise of a high-intensity workout to appeal to people of all ages and fitness levels. This, combined with indoor sports and family entertainment facilities makes Launch Trampoline Park Linden, NJ the ideal place for family fun.



(above, l-r) Councilman Peter Brown Jr., Councilwoman Rhashonna Cosby, Councilman Armando Medina, Councilwoman Gretchen Hickey, Fifteen year NFL veteran Ty Law, Launch office manager Thalia Castrillon, Launch General Manager Mike Metz, Mayor Derek Amsted, and Council President Jorge Alvarez.



Photos from this and other events can be found online at rennamedia.com and on Life in Linden page on facebook.com. Feel free to "Like," "Tag," and "Share."

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The Bayway CAP is a committee of community representatives who attend quarterly meetings that serve as a forum for dialogue between the community and company representatives from Phillips 66 Bayway Refinery, Infineum USA L.P., Linden Cogen Plant, Veolia North America, Eastman Chemical Company, PSEG Power and Linden VFT.



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HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS HEAR HARD TRUTHS ABOUT OPIOID CRISIS

Submitted by Gary Miller

Linden High School students recently got a dose of stark reality about heroin, prescription drugs, and the opioid epidemic that has hit Union County and all of New Jersey so hard.

Officer Victoria Smith, community outreach officer with the Union County Sheriff's Office, spent several days between January 8 and 22, 2018, giving classes information about these dangerous drugs so that they could make informed decision about how to stay safe. Union County suffered 102 overdose deaths in 2017, according to the county Prosecutor's Office. There were also 180 deployments of Narcan, a medicine used to save someone who has overdosed. Twenty-seven of those were in Linden.

Smith stressed that her presentation, which she delivers around the county to students in sixth through 12th grades, is not meant to be preachy or judgmental, but just to lay out the truth.

"You guys are going to need this information so when you go out and have to make real-life decisions, one of those things might be about drugs," she told students of various grade levels during one of her presentations. "It might be about the opioid problem that we see now. So, if

I can give you the information to go out there and make good decisions, then I've done my job."

She told the students that the impetus behind her program came when a seventh-grader in South Jersey died from an overdose.

"How does a seventh-grader, thirteen-years-old, get his hands on heroin laced with fentanyl?" Smith said. "So, we in Union County decided to put a program together to make sure you guys are well informed on the opioid epidemic."

In partnering with law enforcement, Linden Public Schools are better able to educate students on how to stay safe.

"These officers face the opioid crisis every day," said Superintendent Danny A. Robertozzi, "so they are able get past the myths and tell our students exactly what the impacts are if they make bad decisions. Heroin and opioid abuse is a threat to our communities, but the best defense is to make sure our students are educated."

Smith told students what some kinds of opioids are, including illegal drugs like heroin and its far more potent cousin fentanyl, as well as prescription painkillers like codeine, OxyContin and Percocet. She told them some street terms for the drugs, what they look like, and how they are packaged so students would know them if they

see them.

"When they're prescribed by a licensed physician, opioids are used to relieve pain from a surgery or medical illness," she said. "The way we see addiction get started most often is a doctor prescribes an opioid for pain. The doctor will say, 'Take two every six hours.' But now the person is popping three, four, five or six, and the body is becoming dependent."

"The second way is through experimentation, especially in the younger generation. Parties, friends, peer pressure. All that stuff is associated with how we see addiction start to happen."

Though the painkillers are legal, their abuse can lead to addiction, which in turn can lead to far more dangerous drugs.

"When you can no longer afford prescription opioids, people turn to two of the deadliest narcotics," Smith said. "That's heroin and fentanyl. We see people who try heroin for the first time and get addicted. Or worse, they overdose, and they pass away."

She told students to ask her whatever questions they may have, or if they didn't want to ask the question publicly, to talk to her after the presentation. Several of them did.

She also showed two videos, one about the impact on family and friends after a college student died from an overdose, and one a dramatization of the desperate and dangerous life of a heroin addict.

"I'm not here to tell you, 'Don't do this.' I'm here to tell you, 'This is what it is,'" Smith said. "You need to make that decision for yourself. You need to see the reality of it."



(above) Officer Victoria Smith and Linden High School students.

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WINE



Alamos Malbec	750ml	\$ 8.99
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Apothic Red	750ml	\$ 9.29
Avalon (Cabernet Sauvignon).....	750ml	\$ 9.99
Barefoot All Types	1.5L	\$10.39
Bartenura Moscato	750ml	\$10.99
Barone Fini (Pinot Grigio).....	750ml	\$10.99
Beringer White Zinfandel	750ml	\$ 4.99
Beringer White Zinfandel	1.5L	\$ 8.69
Black Box (All Types).....	3L	\$19.99
Blackstone (All Types).....	1.5L	\$13.99
Bogle (Chardonnay and Merlot)	750ml	\$ 6.99
Bolla	1.5L	\$12.99
Caymus Napa Valley (Cabernet Sauvignon).....	750ml	\$75.99
Carlo Rossi (Chablis, Burgundy, Sangria, Blush).....	4L	\$13.99
Carnivor (Cabernet Sauvignon).....	750ml	\$10.99
Casal Garcia Vinho Verde	1L	\$ 5.99
Cavit (All Types)	1.5L	\$13.99
Chateau ste Michelle Columbia Valley Cabernet and Merlot	750ml	\$13.99
Chateau Ste. Michelle Columbia Valley Chardonnay	750ml	\$ 9.95
Chateau Ste. Michelle Columbia Valley Riesling	750ml	\$ 8.99
Clos du Bois Chardonnay	1.5 L	\$19.99
Clos du Bois Cabernet, Merlot.....	750m	\$ 9.95
Cockburns Ruby and Tawny Porto	750ml	\$10.99
Concha Y Toro Frontera	1.5L	\$ 8.99
Coppola Diamond Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot.....	750ml	\$13.99
Coppola Diamond Chardonnay	750ml	\$11.99
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Cupcake (All types, except Prosecco and Moscato)	750ml	\$ 8.99
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Dreaming Tree (All Types)	750ml	\$11.99
Ecco Domani (Pinot Grigio).....	750ml	\$ 8.99
Fish Eye (All Types).....	1.5L	\$ 9.99
Flip Flop (All Types).....	1.5L	\$ 9.99
Franzia (Crisp White, Blush, Sangria, Chilable red).....	5L	\$13.99
Freixenet.....	750ml	\$ 9.99
Gato Negro (All Types)	1.5L	\$ 9.99
Gazela Vinho Verde	750ml	\$ 5.99
Ghost Pines (Merlot and Red Blend).....	750ml	\$15.99
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Josh Cabernet Sauvignon.....	750ml	\$13.99
Joseph Carr Cabernet Sauvignon	750ml	\$22.99
Kendall Jackson Vintners Chardonnay	750ml	\$12.09
Kim Crawford (Sauvignon Blanc)	750ml	\$13.99
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Louis Jadot Beaujolais Villages.....	750ml	\$ 10.99
Louis Jadot Pouilly Fuisse	750ml	\$20.99
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Mark West Pinot Noir.....	750ml	\$ 9.39
Mark West Pinot Noir.....	1.5L	\$17.99
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Menage a Trois Red	750ml	\$ 8.99
Merry Vale (Cabernet)	750ml	\$49.99
Mezzacorona Pinot Grigio.....	1.5L	\$12.99
Mi Amore Red	750ml	\$ 8.99
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Robert Mondavi Private Select	750ml	\$ 8.99
Robert Mondavi Private Select	1.5L	\$16.99
Rodney Strong Sonoma Cabernet & Merlot.....	750ml	\$15.99
Rodney Strong Sonoma Chardonnay	750ml	\$11.99
Rombauer Chardonnay	750ml	\$30.99
Ruffino Chianti	750ml	\$ 7.99
Ruffino Chianti	1.5 L	\$13.99
Ruffino Pinot Grigio	1.5L	\$11.99
Ruffino Chianti Gold	750ml	\$30.99
Ruffino Tan label	750ml	\$19.99
Santa Margerita Pinot Grigio.....	750ml	\$20.29
Senor Sangria (All Types)	1.5L	\$11.99
Silver Oak Alexander Valley Cabernet	750ml	\$70.99
Simi Chardonnay.....	750ml	\$12.09
Sonoma Cutrer Chardonnay.....	750ml	\$20.99
Sutter Home (All Types).....	1.5L	\$ 8.99
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