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STREET SMART PEDESTRIAN SAFETY CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED

Submitted by TransOptions

Union County New Jersey is home to the latest efforts in the statewide Street Smart campaign. The Borough of New Providence, the New Providence Police Department, TransOptions, county and state representatives and other advocates launched the campaign Monday night at the borough's municipal building ahead of a regularly scheduled council meeting. Street Smart is a statewide public awareness campaign that combines educational outreach and high-visibility law enforcement to change behaviors as they relate to pedestrian safety. Street Smart New Providence coincides with Distracted Driving Awareness month.

"We have a long history of working with New Providence through our Safe Routes to School programming and we are looking forward to partnering on another proven safety effort with the Borough," said TransOptions President, Dan Callas. "Reducing pedestrian crashes and fatalities on our roadways is no easy task and working together on programs such as Street Smart is a great way to drive those numbers down in New Providence and New Jersey as a whole."

"New Providence Police Department is pleased to be participating in the Street Smart campaign," said Chief Anthony D. Buccelli, Jr. of the New Providence Police Department. "Officers will be concentrating their efforts on pedestrian safety at high risk crosswalks, and will be observing vehicles who fail to stop for pedestrians, distracted drivers as well as pedestrian violators. The goal is to educate the public, raise awareness and enforce pedestrian laws."

Street Smart's "check your vital signs" slogan emphasizes safe travel roles and responsibilities to both pedestrians and motorists alike. The vital signs are displayed on tip cards, posters, banners and street signs throughout the community and in local businesses during the campaign as a visual reminder for drivers and pedestrians.

TransOptions, a non-profit transportation organization, is leading the Street Smart effort in New Providence, after successfully completing similar campaigns across northwestern New Jersey.

"TransOptions will handle the education portion of the campaign; and will be pairing that outreach



(above, l-r) Zenobia Fields, Director, North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority Department of Planning, Stephen Drown, Sergeant New Providence Police Department, Dan Callas, President of TransOptions, Anthony D. Buccelli, Jr., Chief, New Providence Police Department, Hon. Al Morgan, Mayor of New Providence, Hon. Bette Jane Kowalski, Freeholder Vice Chairman, Union County, Hon. Angel G. Estrada, Freeholder, Union County, Chair of the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority Board of Trustees. Photo courtesy TransOptions.

with surveys and observational analysis of pedestrian behavior in New Providence," said Laura Cerutti, TransOptions' Street Smart project manager. "New Providence has shown that they care about walking and driving safety. By partnering with a proactive community like New Providence, we can work together to accomplish the statewide goal of preventing crashes involving pedestrians and change the common risky behaviors we see on our roadways"

"We are very appreciative of the support provided by TransOptions in helping to educate our residents, visitors, motorists, and pedestrians regarding this very important safety issue," said Mayor of New Providence, Al Morgan.

The New Providence Police Department secured funding for overtime enforcement through a Federal Highway Safety Grant awarded by the New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety (NJDHHS).

For more information on Street Smart, visit TransOptions.org/street-smart, or call TransOptions at 973-267-7600. A non-profit organization, TransOptions is the transportation management association for northwest New Jersey that delivers programs to improve mobility, environment, and overall quality of life of all residents and commuters.

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26TH ANNUAL LETTER CARRIERS' STAMP OUT HUNGER FOOD DRIVE IS MAY 12

The Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger® Food Drive is happening on Saturday, May 12, 2018. On this day, you can set out your non-perishable food before your letter carrier's regular pick up time. The top requested non-perishable food items are: cereal, pasta, pasta sauce, rice, canned fruits and vegetables, canned meals (such as soups, chili, and/or pasta), 100 percent juice, peanut butter, macaroni & cheese, canned protein (tuna, chicken, and/or turkey), beans (canned or dry). You can also donate healthy, low-sodium, low-sugar items such as beans, oatmeal, and other whole grains, and canola or olive oil.

Please do not donate frozen food, homemade food, or home-canned items. Please do not donate items that have expired or are in glass containers. In keeping with good food-handling and food-safety procedures, food that is opened, damaged, out of code or does not have the official ingredients will be discarded by the food bank in the sorting process.

The Food Drive is primarily a people food drive, but if you also want to give pet food in addition to your regular donation, food banks may be able to distribute or direct it to pet shelters and organizations in the area that have a need.

Please do not donate any form of individual baby food products, including formula, jarred vegetables and fruits, meals, snacks, infant cereal. Baby food may be donated by the case or pallet, but single item donations present potential contamination risks and special handling requirements.

The Food Drive is primarily a food drive, but if you also want to give personal care items (such as diapers, laundry detergent, soap, toilet paper, and household cleaning items) in addition to your regular donation, food banks may be able to distribute or put them to good use with organizations that also provide help to those in need. Please note that not all food banks will be able to accept these items.

If you would like to volunteer with food distribution and sorting, or in any other capacity,



call your local post office and ask to speak to the local food drive person there. Many food banks have a great need for volunteers on Food Drive Day, as well as all throughout the year.

All donations to the Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive are tax-deductible because all the food collected on Food Drive Day is given directly to non-profit charity food agencies in the community the food was collected. Though the National Association of Letter Carriers plans the Food Drive's logistics and letter carriers provide the transportation for each donor's generous donation, the National Association of Letter Carriers is not the agency that gets listed on tax forms for claiming deductions. There are more than 10,000 food agencies throughout the country that receive these donations, so if you itemize your taxes and want to provide proper credit for your Food Drive donations, you will need to determine the name of the agency (food pantry or other charity) that received your food, as well as the agency's address and tax I.D. number for proper reporting on your tax-filing forms. The Food Drive Coordinator at your local post office should be able to give you the name of the receiving agency, and that agency will likely have tax information handy.

For more information, visit: nalc.org.

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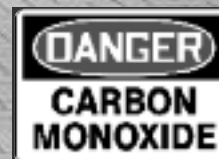
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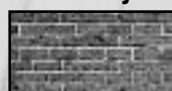
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LIONS CLUB ANNOUNCES THEIR 21ST ANNUAL FRANK A. PIZZI JR. MEMORIAL GOLF TOURN

Submitted by Linda Kale

New Providence Lions Club will hold their 21st Annual Golf Tournament on June 4, 2018 at 9 a.m., at Fox Hollow Golf Club in Branchburg, New Jersey. The annual tournament is in memory of the Honorable Frank A. Pizzi, Jr., Chapter president, distinguished member of the New Providence Lions Club for many years and a Municipal Court Judge from 1976 to 1995.

Join us for a fun-filled day of golf which includes a breakfast and lunch banquet.

Over 90 golfers participated in our tournament last year, raising over \$14,000.

"This tournament continues to evolve after 20 successful years. It is now a Best Ball Foursome event which allows golfers of all skill levels to compete not only for our Championship Trophy (each year's champions are engraved on the trophy) but to compete for spectacular Hole-In-One Prizes including: a 2018 Alfa Romeo, \$10,000 in cash, Big Screen TVs, Airline Tickets, and Golf Clubs. Non-golfing guests are invited to join us for lunch and are eligible to participate in the 50/50 cash drawing and raffle prizes. You do not need to bring a foursome, we will accept entries for individuals, twosomes or threesomes to compete in our event" commented Bob Campbell, co-chairman of the Lion's Golf Committee.

You can help support us in the following ways:

Major Sponsors (\$2,500/\$1,000/\$500)

Hole Sponsorships are available at \$100 each
Contribute a Raffle Prize

Sign up for a foursome or as an individual player: \$660/Foursome, \$170/player or \$160 for Seniors 65+

Sponsor and Player Sign up Forms are available on our website nplions.org

Send us an email at golfouting@nplions.org for more information.

All Sponsors/Donors will be recognized with signage the day of the event, press releases after and on our website throughout the year.

The New Providence Lions Club gives back to the community every dollar it raises. Being a Lion empowers you to help others in a way that no one person could alone. The Lions are dedicated to helping others. Lions make a difference! Organizations that benefit from our annual support are: NP Recreation Dept., Fire Dept., Community Service Assoc., EMS Rescue Squad, Senior Citizens Center, PBA, NPHS Scholarships, NP Historical Society, Health Fair, NP Public Library, Drive for Autism, Soup Kitchen 411, Bonds of Courage and many more.

To Donate: Mail check to NP Lions Club, PO Box 854, New Providence, NJ 07974

For more information/membership please email info@nplions.org or visit: nplions.org.

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MARIJUANA DISCUSSION AT DE CORSO CENTER

Submitted by Marlene Sincaglia

"Marijuana: Decriminalize? Legalize?" Get informed as this issue makes its way through our State Legislature. The League of Women Voters of Berkeley Heights, New Providence and Summit is sponsoring a discussion on Marijuana for Monday, May 21, 2018, at 7:30 p.m. at the De Corso Center, 15 East 4th Street in New Providence, New Jersey.

The presenters are Dianna Houenou, Policy Counsel for the NJ ACLU; Sergeant Gary A. Webb Jr, with the Narcotics Strike Force; and Melissa Tasse PHD, a neuropharmacist with NJ RAMP (Responsible Approaches to Marijuana Policy). A question and Answer session will follow.

Ms. Houenou conducts legal and policy

analysis related to the ACLU-NJ's advocacy campaign and co-ordinates ACLU-NJ coalitions particularly the NJ United for Marijuana Reform.

The American Civil Liberties Union was founded in 1920 and is our nation's guardian of liberty. The ACLU works in the courts, legislatures and communities to defend and preserve the individual rights and liberties guaranteed to all people in this country by the Constitution and laws of the United States.

Sergeant Gary A. Webb is employed by the Union County Prosecutor's Office. He is presently assigned as the Squad Leader for the Narcotics Strike Force. His duties include investigating which leads to the arrest and prosecution of persons involved in the illegal possession and distribution of controlled

substances.

Melissa Tasse has a PhD in neuropharmacology. She is the Founder and CEO of The Honey Bee Foundation which is dedicated to providing education and resources to help prevent substance abuse disorders. She is a member of NJ Ramp. The group believes that science and evidence should guide our approaches to marijuana laws not ideology or profit.

The League of Women Voters is, a nonpartisan political organization which encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

The program is free to the public.

5K WALK & USATF CERTIFIED RACE

NJ Sharing Network Headquarters will be hosting a 5K Walk & USATF Certified Race on Sunday, June 3, 2018, at 691 Central Avenue, New Providence, New Jersey.

Online Registration for this location will close at noon on Friday, June 1. Once online registration closes, registration fees will increase for both adults and children by \$5.

You can still sign up in person during early bib and t-shirt pick-up on Saturday, June 2 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at NJ Sharing Network Headquarters in New Providence, or on event day, Sunday, June 3, starting at 7:30 a.m. at the Registration Tent.

Event Schedule:

7:30am - Registration Opens

8:30am - USATF Certified Timed
5K Race Begins

9:15am - Rewards & Race Awards
at Main Stage

10:00am - 5K Walk Begins

For more information, visit:

njsharingnetwork.org

[/5k/eventinfo/newprovidence](http://5k/eventinfo/newprovidence)

2018 MAY 31 - JUNE 3

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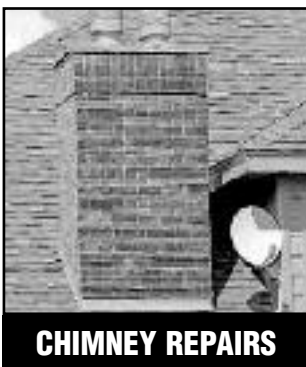
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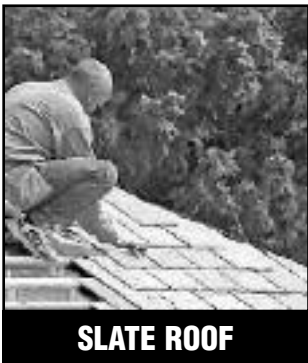
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NEW PROVIDENCE RESIDENT CARMELLA BERNARDO'S 100TH BIRTHDAY

Submitted by Michelle Zack

The New Providence Senior Citizens Club gathered at the DeCorso Community Center on April 4, 2018 to celebrate the 100th birthday of lifetime New Providence resident Carmella Bernardo. Carmella regularly attends meetings of the Club and enjoys playing Bingo at the DeCorso Center.

Mayor Al Morgan read a proclamation honoring Carmella on her 100th birthday and wished her and her family "every good wish for success, health and continued happiness in the years to come." Councilman Robert Robinson, as well as Carmella's family and friends, also joined in the celebration.



(above) Carmella.



(above) Carmella (left) and family members.

NEW PROVIDENCE SENIOR HEALTH FAIR AT DECORSO COMMUNITY CENTER

The New Providence Senior Citizen Health Fair will take place on Wednesday, May 16, 2018, from 8 to 11 a.m. at the DeCorso Community Center, 15 E. 4th Street, New Providence, New Jersey. All New Providence residents age 55 or older are invited to attend. The Health Fair will host a comprehensive list of health screenings and medical information at no

cost to participants. The Fasting Blood Chemistry and the Stroke Health Risk Assessment screenings require in person pre-registration prior to the health fair. Stroke assessments are limited to the first 30 registrants. For additional information, call the DeCorso Community Center at 908-665-0046 or the NP Health Department at 908-743-1049.

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THE CELEBRATION SINGERS SPRING 2018 CONCERT

Submitted by Christopher Silvestri

The Celebration Singers would like to invite you to our spring concert titled “Music from the Heart, from the Soul” at Union County College, Roy Smith Theater, 1033 Springfield Avenue, Cranford, New Jersey at 8 p.m. on June 1 and June 2, 2018. Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$15 for children and seniors. Tickets can be purchased in advance through our website, celebrationsingers.org, or at the box office at the night of the concert. Any questions concerning the performances can be directed to our email at celebrationsingersnewjersey@gmail.com or to our landline at 908-552-4656.

The Celebration Singers are multi-generational ambassadors of song drawing music from a

breadth of genres and cultures. The Choir's commitment to artistic excellence and its engaging and dynamic style provide its diverse singers and audiences with a compelling musical experience. The Choir lends support through music and participates in the cultural life of the community.

Please also visit our Facebook page: facebook.com/Celebrationsingers.

Funding for the Celebration Singers is made possible in part by the New Jersey State Council for the Arts, Department of State, through a grant administered by the Union County Office of Cultural and Heritage Affairs.



(above) The Celebration Singers Adult Choir at St Michael's in Cranford New Jersey for their annual winter concert.

CSA YOUTH TO HOST COMMUNITY YARD SALE

Submitted by Jennifer Niederhoffer

Get ready for a little spring cleaning and some bargain shopping, all for a good cause. CSA (Community Service Association of New Providence) Youth is collecting items and holding a community yard sale on May 20, 2018 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the New Providence Community Pool parking lot, New Providence, New Jersey. The CSA Youth Community Yard Sale will be held rain or shine.

Members of the community can drop off items at the pool parking lot from 9 to 10 a.m. on May 20. At 10 a.m., the sale will be open to the public, and all are welcome to come by and shop for some great deals!

All donated items must be in good working order and can include: household goods, small appliances, books, CDs and DVDs, toys, bikes, jewelry, electronics, sporting goods, and small furniture. The CSA Youth volunteers respectfully ask that you do not bring any large televisions.

CSA Youth works in conjunction with the Community Service Association of New Providence to actively engage New Providence high school students in giving back by volunteering for community service projects. These acts directly impact and provide assistance to needy members of the community.

All proceeds from the yard sale will benefit CSA Youth. For more information, visit csanewprovidence.org/csa-youth or email csanewprovidence@gmail.com.

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NEW PROVIDENCE MEMORIAL DAY PARADE

On Monday, May 28, 2018 New Providence will remember the brave men and women who gave the ultimate sacrifice while serving in this country's armed forces. The New Providence Memorial Day Parade will step off at 10 a.m. along Springfield Avenue between Central

Avenue and Academy Street, New Providence, New Jersey. After the parade, American Legion Post #433, located next to the library and the DeCorso Community Center (15 East 4th Street), invites everyone for hot dogs and light refreshments.

RUBBER DUCKY RACE TO BENEFIT RESIDENTS

Submitted by Michelle Zack

The Rotary Club of Berkeley Heights will sponsor the annual "Rubber Ducky Race" with festival family fun from noon to 4 p.m. at Passaic River Park, 151 Springfield Avenue, Berkeley Heights, New Jersey, on Saturday, June 9, 2018. The Rubber Ducky race is a major fundraiser to reduce the costs to seniors for the Medical Alert system offered by the Berkeley Heights Rotary Club. The alert system helps seniors who live at home in both New Providence and Berkeley Heights.

"Adoption" tickets costing \$5 for each rubber ducky will be available for sale each Wednesday in May at meetings of the New Providence Senior Citizens Club, and also will be available for purchase 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on weekdays throughout the month of May at the DeCorso Community Center, 15 East Fourth Street in New Providence, New Jersey.

The grand prize this year is four box seats behind home plate at a Yankee home game valued at \$1,000. Additional prizes will be awarded for the fastest ducky swimmers!

WINE TASTING TO BENEFIT BOY SCOUTS

The Boy Scouts of America and volunteer co-chairs, Dawn and Rich Buchanan of Fanwood will host a Riedel Wine Tasting on May 29, at 6:30 p.m. at the Masker's Barn located in the Watchung Reservation in Berkeley Heights, NJ.

Guests will enjoy great wines using Riedel wine glasses, learn more about wines, how to pour them, the effect wine glasses have and how to improve the overall enjoyment of wine.

The ticket price of \$150 includes hors d'oeuvres, four glasses of wine rated 90 or better on the Wine Spectator List, buffet dinner, dessert, auction, and a set of four Riedel wine glasses to take home.

The proceeds of this event provide the necessary funds to send underprivileged youth to four of our camps in New Jersey and New York State. Over 3000 youth are served in this program, and a total of 16,000 youth served in traditional Scouting in our area. Most recently the BSA has enhanced STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) content in every facet of Scouting, from summer camp to the Pinewood Derby, by developing programs that explore the STEM principles behind familiar Scouting activities. The STEM Program is another beneficiary of this event.

Registration for the event is required at ppcbsa.org/give/special-events by May 22. Attendees must be 21 or older. All contributions over \$50 are tax deductible.

Contact Jennifer Volz at 973-765-9322 ext. 249 or at jennifer.volz@scouting.org with questions.

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MAY 2018 EVENTS AT NEW PROVIDENCE MEMORIAL LIBRARY

The New Providence Memorial Library is located at 377 Elkwood Avenue, New Providence. For more information call: 908-665-0311.

Visit the library's website at: newprovidencelibrary.org. Like us on Facebook at facebook.com/NewProvLibrary for updates.

All events are FREE and open to the public.

Memoir Writing Workshops

Please join local author and educator JoAnn Jackovino for a three-session workshop on memoir writing. Sessions are free, but we ask that you bring a notebook, a pen, and your imaginations. All are welcome to attend. Please sign up at the Reference Desk.

Workshop Dates: May 12 and 19: from 2 to 4 p.m.

The Knitting Club

meets two times this month on

May 7 and 21 at 7 p.m.

Bring a project you are working on or get instruction on a knitting or crocheting project you would like to start.

Finding the right college can be stressful

Join us on

May 8 at 7 p.m.

as Collegewise Counselor Nikayla Loy teaches families how to identify the schools at which their student will be happiest and most successful. This seminar will teach attendees how to be savvy college shoppers. Seating is limited. This event is free, but registration is required.

Please call Collegewise at 201-632-3308 or email nikaylal@collegewise.com.

Join us in the Coddington Room for

a special Mandarin & Spanish Storytime presented by The Hudson Way Immersion School.

On May 12 at 11 a.m.

Children and their parents are invited to experience an immersion school foreign language story time and learn more about their new school opening in the area this fall.

The Baseball Club

holds its regular monthly meeting on

May 14 at 7 p.m.

Anybody with an interest in baseball is welcome to come and talk about your favorite team, players or just listen.

The Thursday Morning Book Group

meets on

May 17 at 10 a.m.

o discuss Madame Picasso by Anne Girard, a story that brings to life the mesmerizing and untold story of Eva Gouel, the unforgettable woman who stole the heart of

the greatest artist of our time. When Eva Gouel moves to Paris from the countryside, she is full of ambition and dreams of stardom. Though young and inexperienced, she manages to find work as a costumer at the famous Moulin Rouge, and it is here that she first catches the attention of Pablo Picasso, a rising star in the art world.

All are welcome.

Copies of the book are available at the front desk.

Come and celebrate May with another wonderful

Sunday Concert. Laura George,

flutist & Eric Olson, pianist

will perform classic and popular music at 3 p.m. on May 20.

As always, there is a full schedule of movies available.

This month, featured movies are "The Mountain Between Us," "Goodbye Christopher Robin," "Thank You for Your Service," "Dunkirk," and "Fatima." See the library calendar on our website for full dates, times, and descriptions.

For the younger set, there are baby lapsits on Wednesdays.

Bigger kids, i.e. ages 4, 5, and 6 have a special story time

on Tuesdays at 2 p.m. and Wednesdays & Thursdays at 10 a.m. Every Thursday at 2 p.m. there's a drop-in craft, too. And don't forget about our

after-school clubs: Snap Circuits, Jr.

meets on the second Tuesday of the month at 3:30 p.m.

and LEGO

meets on the fourth Tuesday of the month at 3:30 p.m.

in the Coddington Room.

A full calendar of events including regular meetings of morning and evening book clubs, the Knitting Club, the Baseball Club, movies and kids' events is available at newprovidencelibrary.org.

And just a reminder, the New Providence Memorial Library will be closed on May 27, 28, and 30.

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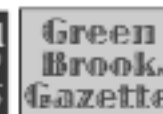
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CRISIS HOTLINE SCREENS FILM TO RAISE SUICIDE AWARENESS

Submitted by Janet Sarkos

The crisis hotline Caring Contact will present a special screening of "Suicide: The Ripple Effect," the remarkable story of Kevin Hines, who at 19 attempted to take his life by jumping from the Golden Gate Bridge. The screening will take place May 16, at 7:30 p.m. at AMC Loews at 1021 Route 22 East, Mountainside, New Jersey.

Following the screening, there will be a question and answer session and discussion on the topic, featuring some of the area's leading suicide prevention advocates. This discussion will be led by trained volunteers who are involved with Caring Contact.

Tickets are \$12, plus a processing fee, and can be purchased by visiting gathr.us/s/22327, where visitors can also view the film trailer and screening page. Tickets are limited so reservations are highly recommended.

With endorsements from some of the world's leading suicide prevention experts, "Suicide: The

Ripple Effect" began worldwide screenings on March 13, 2018. Since surviving the jump, one of only 25 to live among the more than 1700 people who have jumped from the bridge, Hines has been on a mission to use his story to help others find recovery and stay alive. He has become one the world's most prominent suicide prevention speakers and advocates.

The film features some of the world's leading suicide prevention experts and shines light on people who are using their personal experiences with suicide to help others find the hope they need to stay alive.

"Kevin Hines' 'Suicide: The Ripple Effect' is a marvel of inspiration, a film that should be seen by anyone who has known despair and anyone who is or has been close to someone in a suicidal crisis," said Dr. John Draper of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

Caring Contact is an award-winning, volunteer-staffed crisis hotline and listening community serving North and Central New

Jersey, an area with 3 million inhabitants in Union, Essex, Middlesex, Morris and Somerset counties. More than 100 listeners attentively and compassionately serve those in emotional distress and educate communities about the power of personal connection. Caring Contact responded to more than 10,200 calls in 2017.

Caring Contact is a member agency of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline network and its hotline services are available to anyone, anonymously and confidentially. Visit Caring Contact at: caringcontact.org

NAMI SUPPORT GROUP FOR CAREGIVERS OF LOVED ONES WITH MENTAL ILLNESS MAY 15

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Union County is hosting a support group for caregivers of loved ones who have a mental health diagnosis. Join our peer led monthly group meetings and gain insight from others facing similar challenges.

The next meeting is May 15, 2018, 7:30 to 9 p.m. Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of every month at the First Presbyterian Church of Cranford, 11 Springfield Avenue, Cranford, New Jersey. For more info call 908-233-1628 or email namiunioncounty@yahoo.com

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WE WEREN'T BAD KIDS, WE WERE SAD KIDS: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AT IMAGINE SHARES HER STORY

By Mary Robinson, MA, CT

When I was 14 my father died of cancer, reticulum cell sarcoma, still one of the most deadly and difficult cancer to treat. It was 1974 and I was a freshman at Madison High School, my brother Jim was a sophomore. I remember it like it was yesterday and still dream of my dad, and still miss him. The death of a parent changes a child's life forever, as it did mine.

When my father was first diagnosed I was in eighth grade and that's when I first started skipping school. Though not a very helpful way to cope with my distress, it was also not unusual, as grief starts the moment of diagnosis; someone doesn't have to die for us to grieve. And that was certainly true of me and my family.

After our dad died my brother and I acted out in ways typical of grieving children, we were textbook examples of grieving children in fact, but at that time it wasn't understood that children grieve too, not just adults. The adults in our lives saw our changed behavior but didn't know what to do or say, or even to equate it with our dad's death and changed home life.

My mom was extraordinarily resilient all through my dad's illness and after he died. She went from being a stay-at-home mom to being a realtor, seemingly working 24/7 to pay the bills and keep us in our home. She is definitely my hero for how she worked so hard on our behalf, sending me to college and making the life I live today possible. But not all kids are so lucky. Often after a death there is great financial stress along with many secondary losses like having to move to a new neighborhood or even a new town, so a child loses friends, a sense of safety and familiarity and connections to the very people that could have been supportive.

I've now been working and volunteering in the field of children's grief support since 1997, working to ensure other children and teens don't lose years of their lives to unresolved grief like my brother and I did. The death of a parent is a trauma for a child but it doesn't have to leave them traumatized, if they get support. As the founder of two children's grief support centers

and currently as Executive Director of Imagine, A Center for Coping with Loss in Mountainside, my commitment is to ensure grieving children develop healthy coping skills, grow in their resiliency, emotional health and well-being, and to create communities where children coping with loss get the love and support they need to thrive and live up to their unique potential.

Dr. Gerald Glasser of Westfield was the catalyst for the start of Imagine. He wanted to insure that no child should ever have to grieve alone. He invited me to come to Westfield and open a grief support center providing an initial grant for startup funding through The Glasser Foundation, a philanthropic organization set up in memory of Dr. Glasser's son, Thomas Glasser, who was a victim of the 9/11 attack and who left behind two young children. The Glasser Foundation continues to provide extraordinarily generous annual support to Imagine.

Meeting Dr. Glasser was such a gift in my life. His generosity and vision provided me with my life's purpose. When my father died there was no awareness back then that children and teens needed support after a loss like the death of a parent or brother or sister. Children truly were 'the forgotten mourners' as Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, author of *On Death and Dying* said over 40 years ago. But fortunately things have gotten better since then with over 500 children's grief support centers like Imagine existing around the country, and with schools bringing us in to provide educational workshops so that they are better equipped to support and understand youth coping with all types of loss. Now when a parent dies, families tell us that they heard about Imagine from multiple sources including their child's school, their funeral home or house of worship, and from multiple friends who scour the internet looking for support.

Childhood bereavement is one of society's more pervasive issues. One out of seven children under the age of 18 will lose a parent or sibling by age 20. And kids in grief are at-risk for unhealthy or destructive ways of coping which is why Imagine and other centers like it exist. Children and teens don't necessarily have the coping skills, life experience, or maturity to process their loss, and they re-grieve their losses during the various stages of their development. Imagine exists as an effective intervention and prevention program and a place for healthy mourning. The key to how well a child or teen or adult will do after a loss is to actively mourn the loss and not keep everything bottled up inside.

The mission of Imagine is to support children and families coping with loss and foster resiliency and emotional well-being for all those who grieve. But our higher purpose is to normalize grief and death and dying in society so that those who are grieving aren't left isolated or made to feel like there is something wrong with them. Our goal is to create "Good Mourning" communities that are grief- and trauma-informed. We do this by partnering with schools, agencies and workplaces to provide support and education on the topic of grief and loss and to hopefully



(above, l-r) Mary Robinson and her dad, Gerry Robinson.

change the lens through which society views grieving youth.

We work with the whole school community including school staff, parents, other agencies, healthcare providers, and first responders to create an environment that wraps around the youth served. The goal is that wherever a child turns in their life, at school, home, after-school programs, etc., there are adults who understand the impact of loss and trauma on youth, how to recognize it and how to support, listen to, and help build resilience in grieving youth.

Adults and peer support programs like Imagine can help children learn healthy ways to cope and grow more resilient. Loss is part of life and if we support children at the time of their loss they will be better able to cope with future life losses.

Over 40 years later, I am able to say, as I learned from my St. Vincent's School kindergarten friend Chris Harrington whose mom died when he was 11, that "I wouldn't have missed my dad for the world." I had the best dad for 14 years. Good can come from grief, loss, and pain, if we get and give support. As adults it is our job to help children navigate life's painful losses and create loving, supportive communities in which children can mourn their losses in healthy ways. That is the work of Imagine and all the centers like it around the country.

Imagine is a free year-round peer grief support center located in Mountainside, New Jersey serving children age 3 to 18 who have had a parent or sibling die, with concurrent support groups for their parents or guardians. Support for children and teens living with a parent or sibling with a life-altering physical illness is also available. Free year-round support groups are also available for young adults who have had a friend, sibling, parent or other important person in their life die, or who have a parent, sibling or friend living with an illness. Imagine is completely privately funded and completely free to participants for as long as they need. We rely on donations from individuals, companies, local businesses, and foundations to support the close to 300 children and adults currently attending our support groups every two weeks at Imagine. And we rely on volunteers to facilitate those groups. For more information about support, donating, or volunteering, please call 908-264-3100, email me at mary@imagine-nj.org or visit imagine-nj.org.



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In this workshop, you will learn:

- How to increase your college-related tax deductions and tax credits
- How to pick colleges that will give you the best financial aid packages
- How to send your child to an expensive private university for less than a state school
- Which assets are taken into consideration when the U.S. Department of Education calculates your Expected Family Contribution (EFC)
- How to pay for college in a failing economy without relying on 529 plans, expensive private student loans or raiding your retirement accounts
- How to get ahead by developing a customized plan to meet all the college costs you will incur as a family
- How to lower your "out-of-pocket" costs and get the maximum amount of money from each school

Here is what
parents like you
are saying about our
FREE
College Funding
Workshop...

"Very informative.
The presenter told us many
things that I was totally in the
dark about".

*Rosie Palumbo,
Parent of High School Junior*

"Information was clear, easy to
understand and straight
forward. Excellent presentation
- no hidden agendas."

*Lynn McKenna,
Parent of High School Senior*

"Opened up opportunity to look
at colleges we thought were out
of our price range."

*Barbara Eames, Parent
of High School Sophomore*

"Covered a lot of ground - easy
to follow and moved quickly."

*Sara Pogue,
Parent of High School Junior*

"Demystified the college
funding process"

*Joseph Mozzella,
Parent of High School Senior*



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