

CRANFORD MONTHLY_{NJ}

Published by Renna Media

Issue 57 • August 2018



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FIRST AID SQUAD EXCELS AT STATE EMS COMPETITION

Submitted by Kent Lucas

Fourteen Cranford First Aid Squad cadets entered the New Jersey State Cadet competition and Cranford teams came home with 1st and 3rd places. The event was hosted by Keyport First Aid Squad, with teams coming from New York and Pennsylvania in addition to New Jersey.

The Cranford team of Caitlin Cook, Grace DiGiovanni, Emily Marinucci and Layla Serna won first place. The team of Zack Kornberger, Joseph Lopes and Parth Shah won third place.

Others competing were Emma DeBole, Kristina Kortbaoui, Enya Manning, Jayna Mallon, Dan Gomez, Amanda Hogan and Winona Whelan. Advisors for the teams were Abraham Pritzker, Justin Goncalves, Sue Lucas and Kent Lucas.

Cranford competed in the Advanced division, where the three to four-person teams were required to have at least one certified EMT. They were judged in three scenarios, including a trauma victim, a cardiac victim, and a motor vehicle collision with entrapped victims.

Advanced teams were judged on patient assessment and proper equipment use - backboard, traction splint, cervical collar, oxygen and nitroglycerin administration, obtaining vital

signs, CPR and airway management. The teams worked with fire department crews during the car crash scenarios with actual vehicles.

The Cranford First Aid Squad cadet program consists of high school members from age 16-18, with the intent of them becoming New Jersey certified EMTs. Cranford has the largest cadet program in Union County with over 20 members.



(above) The first place team posing with their trophy. The team included Caitlin Cook, Grace DiGiovanni, Emily Marinucci and Layla Serna.



(above) Fourteen Cranford First Aid Squad cadets competed in the New Jersey State Cadet competition. Events included a trauma victim, a cardiac victim and a motor vehicle collision with entrapped victims that tested each teams' abilities.



(above) Posing with their third place trophy, was the team of Zack Kornberger, Joseph Lopes and Parth Shah.

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CRANFORD'S SORAYA FERNANDEZ TO ADVOCATE FOR FOSTER YOUTH

Judge administers oath to nine new CASA volunteers

Soraya Fernandez of Cranford is among the latest class of community volunteers to complete child advocacy training and take their oath from Superior Court Judge James Hely to become Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Union County. After being sworn in, Fernandez noted that she decided to become a CASA because, "It only takes one person to change a life. I'm hoping I can be that positive influence for a child."

Volunteers with CASA serve as extra eyes and ears for family law judges hearing cases involving the county's abused, neglected or abandoned children removed from home and placed in foster care. They have court-ordered access to all parties in a foster child's life, including foster parents, doctors, caseworkers, therapists and teachers, and incorporate findings into court reports from these contacts as well as time spent with the youth. In addition to ensuring their needs are met and best interests protected, the CASA volunteers aim to become a constant in the life of their assigned youth, who are living amid unknowns about their future, changing caseworkers and multiple foster homes.

The new advocates are ages 28 to 72 and include parents and non-parents; professionals in business, technology, education and law enforcement; students; retirees; and homemakers. Most had no prior knowledge of the foster system. Each will soon receive their case and meet the foster youth for whom they will advocate.

It is CASA of Union County's goal that every Union County foster child have an advocate, yet

half of the more than 500 such youth still await one. Could you be their voice? Two trainings are slated for the fall.

For details, contact Courtney at 908-293-8136 or cgreen@casaoofunioncounty.org, or log on to www.casaoofunioncounty.org.



(above) Cranford resident Soraya Fernandez was sworn in to become a Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Union County, along with 8 other new volunteers.

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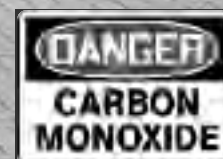
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“CRANFORD GOLD” TEAM WINS 12U SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT

Submitted by Kristine Farley

The Cranford Baseball and Softball League hosted their annual 12U Softball Tournament during the weekend of July 6, 2018. Due to a rainstorm, the games on Friday night were canceled and one team dropped out last minute, requiring the 12UA Cranford Gold Girls to play 4 games on Saturday, July 7. Through the heat and number of games, the girls persevered and ended up being the number 2 seed in the standings.

On Sunday, July 8, they won their first game in the play-off with a 12-1 score and got ready to play #3 seed MSO Red, a very strong team.

The semi-final game looked like MSO Red was going to win. Cranford was down 0-5 going into the bottom of the 4th inning. Cranford scored 2 in the bottom of the 4th, bringing the score up to 2-5. Both teams were scoreless in the 5th inning. At the top of the 6th, MSO Red scored another run, bringing the score to 2-6. Finally, in the bottom of the 6th, the Cranford bats came alive! The girls managed to score 5 runs, bringing the score to 7-6! At the top of the 7th inning Cranford Gold held MSO Red and won the semi-final game.

12UA Cranford Gold advanced to the finals where they would face the #1 seed, Chatham. Cranford took an early lead in the final game. They were up 6-0 going into the 4th inning. However, Chatham was not going down without

a fight! Chatham scored 1 in the bottom of the 4th, 2 in the bottom of the 5th and another 2 in the bottom of the 6th. Going into the 7th inning, Cranford was up 7-5. Both teams were pumped, but stayed scoreless in that 7th inning.

Cranford Gold won the tournament. This was the first time this group of girls had won a tournament since they were the 8UA team. It truly was a team effort to win! Congratulations to all the girls and coaches on a job well done!



(above) The Cranford Gold U12 softball team won the annual tournament this year, persevering through the heat and tough matches.

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LEALA ARNOLD WINS 2018 GERARD PARADISO SCHOLARSHIP

The Friends of the Cranford Public Library are pleased to announce the recipient of the 2018 Gerard Paradiso Scholarship.

Leala Arnold, scholarship winner, is on track to graduate from San Jose State University in December 2018 with a Masters in Library and Information Science. Ms. Arnold holds a BA in English from Montclair State University and a BA in Film from Kean University. She is

currently employed as a Youth Services Associate at the Branch Brook Branch of the Newark Public Library.

The Gerard Paradiso Scholarship provides \$1,000 dollars to a Cranford resident pursuing or intending to pursue a graduate degree in library and information science. It is named for former Friends of the Cranford Public Library President Gerard Paradiso.



(above, l-r) Cranford Public Library Director Michael Maziekien, Scholarship Winner Leala Arnold, Friends of the Cranford Public Library President Anthony Cirillo.



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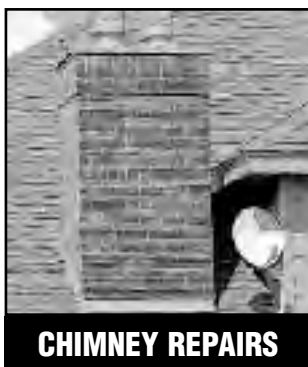
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CRANFORD VFW AIMS FOR A NEW FUTURE

By Jim D'Arcy, Past Commander

Exciting things are happening at VFW Post #335 in Cranford. Not only has it elected a new slate of officers for the upcoming year, but the front lawn of the Post Home is sporting some new and historical hardware.

Colonel Andrew Burns of Cranford has been elected Commander of the Post replacing Jay Boxwell who had a very successful three years at the helm of Cranford's only veteran's organization. Simultaneous with the election of a new slate of officers, the Post also refurbished both a World War II era "Pac Howitzer" and "Recoilless Rifle" and installed them at the front of the Post Home on South Avenue.

Along with Colonel Burns, other officers elected for the new year were Lew Blowe, Senior Vice Commander and Jerry Krug as Junior Vice Commander. Returning as Post Chaplain is the Memorial Day Grand Marshall Jim Silkensen, while the venerable Joe Del Grippo will be continuing as Quartermaster as Dennis King returns as Post Adjutant. The Post Trustees will be John Morrison, Jay Boxwell and Michael Carberry.

Commander Boxwell forged an amazing three-year tenure at Cranford's VFW. During the 2016-2017 year he led Post #335 to become not only an "All State Post" but one of the top 25 VFW Posts in the nation winning "All American Post" honors, which is a first for Cranford in its 98-year history. Boxwell will be currently serving his second year as District 5 (Union County) VFW Commander and is the NJ State VFW POW/MIA Chairman.

The incoming Commander Burns is a retired U.S. Army Colonel having spent 31 years in service to our country in both the regular army and the reserves. He is an Iraqi veteran, serving at Balad, Iraq, as well as having served at Camp Casey and Yongsan, South Korea. Of commendable note is that Burns started his army career as an enlisted man and retired as a full colonel. He is married to his wife Elizabeth and they have a daughter Catherine at home.

The new armament adorning the front of the Post was acquired from the now defunct Rahway VFW and was in dire need of a facelift, so with the professional assistance of Moran Automotive & Towing Inc. of Kearny (donated new tires), Matt's Flatbed Towing of Westfield (free towing & delivery), Perfection Plus Auto Body, Kenilworth (donated painting), Rob's Crane Service, Cranford (free placement of the howitzer), and JB Paverstones, Clark, NJ Truck Welding Services, Garwood and Larry's Quick

Strip, Carteret, the project was brought to an admirable completion, just in time for Memorial Day.

The men and women of VFW Post #335 want to thank all those involved in the project to refurbish and mount the hardware at the Post. It was a tremendous team effort.



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PARALYMPIC DREAMS FOR CRANFORD'S CATARINA GUIMARAES

Submitted by John Guimaraes

Catarina Guimaraes walks and talks like a typical 14 year old girl, but it's what you don't see that makes her journey so special.

Catarina was born 9 weeks premature, and while everything was as normal as could be, it wasn't until later she was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy. What manifested as a "Toe Walker" quickly became a condition which prevents half her body from normally reacting to brain signals.

Today, through constant therapy, physical activity and daily exercise and conditioning, Catarina is coming onto the scene of Adaptive or Paralympic Track and Field with flare. Now internationally ranked with many 20 year olds, she made a name for herself in this year's International Wheelchair and Adaptive Sports competition held in Athlone, Ireland.

Catarina represented Team USA in the 100m, 200m, 400m and Long Jump with athletes from around the world and of varying degrees of disability.

Earning a Silver medal in the the Long Jump and the 400m, Catarina has solidified her position in emerging athlete status with the US Olympic Team.

With the competition schedule wrapping up, Catarina has one more major competition this year which is the National Junior Disability Championships held in Indianapolis. Her training doesn't stop there as she prepares to tryout for High School Soccer and High School Track and Field.

Catarina, an incoming Freshman to Cranford High School, is by no means typical, just an example of what focus and hard work can mean to any person with challenges.



(above) Catarina Guimaraes, pictured left, during medal presentation.



(above) Cranford rising freshman Catarina Guimaraes represented Team USA at the International Wheelchair and Adaptive Sports competition held in Athlone, Ireland this year. Her hard work and dedication earned her the Silver medal in the the Long Jump and the 400m.

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be provided.

This is a free event and recommended for ages 7 and under. No need to register, just show up! In the event of rain, Story Time will be cancelled for the day. For more information please visit our website, hansonparkconservancy.com.



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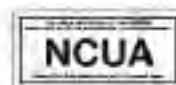
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MEET U.S. MARINE CORPORAL PAUL W. SJURSEN, ONE OF CRANFORD'S 86 HOMETOWN HEROES

By Don Sweeney with Lt. Col. Steven Glazer (Ret.), and Stu Rosenthal

As we continue to research our elite group of 86 Cranford residents who heroically gave their lives in service to our country, we are reminded that some were involved in battles having less than memorable names or were simply identified by a hill number appearing on a map. And while these battles may not be recalled often or forever associated with a Pulitzer-winning photograph, the gallant men died for geography deemed essential by our nation for achieving overall victory. When a young man or woman joins the ranks of the military, they rarely have any say as to where they serve. Generals and admirals, often far removed from the bloodstained trenches and roiled waves of battle, make grand decisions that will change the course of war – as well as the lives of the ranks who carry out their strategic plans. This month's Hometown Hero, Corporal Paul Warren Sjursen (pronounced 'Shoor-sen'), lost his life during one such battle in the Southwest Pacific during World War II.

The Battle of Eniwetok ('en-uh-wee-tok') was part of an 'island-hopping' strategy adopted by President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill for the establishment of bases from which to launch Allied bombers in preparation for a final assault on Japan. Eniwetok Atoll, located in the northwestern part of the Marshall Islands, was a ring-shaped reef comprising some 30 small islands of coral and sand surrounding a lagoon. After capturing Eniwetok Atoll during World War I, the Japanese built airfields on its largest islands -- Eniwetok, Engebi and Parry. Allied commanders deemed the capture of Eniwetok Atoll as a forward operating base with established airfields a major objective in 1944.

As I started research on Corporal Sjursen's story, I had never seen the word 'Eniwetok' and I had no idea what an atoll was. For 3500 American Marines and soldiers thrown into combat, Eniwetok Atoll would be a name most would never forget. For about 350, however, it would be the name on a final casualty list.

Paul Sjursen was the third son of a Norwegian immigrant family. Born on the Fourth of July 1922 in Cranford, he lived first at 109 Severin Court, then briefly at 2 Clay Avenue before moving to 1 Oak Lane. And while Norwegian

customs were taught to the four boys, Paul's father Halvadan emphasized that only English was to be spoken in the home. Paul attended Lincoln School, where he was active in planning events like the Valentine's Day Dance, a rather advanced job for a sixth grader we thought. At the Methodist Church, he was said to be prominent in youth activities. After graduation from Cranford High School in 1940, Paul found employment, as many did, at Western Electric in Kearny. It was the largest telecommunications manufacturing facility in the country employing 24,000. With the war raging in Asia and Europe, Paul chose to join the Marine Corps on January 24, 1942. He was the second in his family to serve; brother Clifford was already flying C-47 transport aircraft with the Army Air Corps.

After three months of basic training and three more of infantry school in San Diego, Paul was ordered to American Samoa on July 19, 1942, for jungle training. One year later, in July 1943, Paul shipped out with his unit, the 22nd Marine Regiment, to Kahului on Maui in Hawaii, where he began training in amphibious landings and honing skills for an upcoming mission. In January 1944, he would depart Hawaii with his unit on the USS Heywood.

The Battle of Eniwetok began with Engebi

Island, at the northern tip of the atoll, measuring two miles long and one-quarter of a mile wide. It started on February 17, 1944, with a naval bombardment throughout the day and night to soften the objective. Patrick Castaldo, another member of our Cranford 86, was on board heavy cruiser USS Indianapolis providing fire support for his fellow Cranford High graduate. The following morning, Corporal Sjursen's 2nd Battalion, 22nd Marine Regiment, began its amphibious assault on Engebi. Resistance was light and the forces moved rapidly inland. The objective was secured by late afternoon. Nevertheless, US losses included 85 dead and missing, plus 166 wounded.

On February 19th, with intelligence reports of little resistance expected, a very light bombardment preceded the attack on Eniwetok Island -- a larger, triangular island with each side measuring one mile. Here, the Japanese held strong "spider hole" positions within shallow camouflaged holes, some intricately connected underground to protect them from the naval bombardment. The Japanese defenders were thus ready for the landing of the Army's 106th Infantry Regiment and the 1st and 3rd Battalions of the 22nd Marine Regiment. Two days of fierce around-the-clock fighting finally brought victory.



(above) A young Paul Sjursen, probably at their home on Severin Court.



(above) Front page of the Cranford Chronicle in March 1944.



(above) A portrait painted in 1961 by an unknown artist gives us our first look at his Norwegian blonde hair and blue eyes, a handsome young man.



(above) Cranford High School's 1940 yearbook, in 1940 asking someone to sign your yearbook was taken literally.



(above) The Sjursen brothers: Ralph 13, Herbert 24, Clifford 23 and Paul 19, taken before the beginning of the US involvement in WW2.



(above) Parents Leonora (Arneson) and Halvdan Sjursen.-- The brothers, from left to right are Herbert, Paul and Clifford.

CORPORAL PAUL W. SJURSEN (continued)

The ability of the enemy to defend their island was largely underestimated by US intelligence. American casualties were high.

The final assault was for Parry Island, the smallest among the battle. Corporal Sjursen's 2nd Battalion, with 5 days rest since the victory at Engebi, would lead the attack at the northern end of the island. The commanders were not going to make the same mistake made at Eniwetok. The big guns of the USS Tennessee and USS Pennsylvania, along with other ships, delivered an unprecedented 950 tons of explosives on the tiny island before the landing forces stepped foot on it. Additional firepower from artillery units with howitzer cannons on nearby Japtan Island added to the bombardment. It was the morning of February 22nd, a full day of intense fighting lie ahead against Japanese forces driven by a "fight to the death" dedication to their Emperor Hirohito. Our research team uncovered a blow-by-blow account of the day. (See the link at Cranford86.org.)

Our forces surged slowly forward on the narrow, 2-mile-long, tear-shaped island. Finally, in a nighttime, violent conclusion to the 6-day battle, the 22nd Marine Regiment had the remaining Japanese forces isolated on the southern end of the island called Slumber Point. In wartime Japanese style, the cornered defenders fought to the death. But the threat from any organized resistance was over. Eniwetok Atoll was effectively under US control. That evening, the Marine commander on Parry radioed a message to the fleet offshore, "We present you with Parry Island as a Washington's Birthday present." In response, the fleet's flagship issued its own message, saying that our country's flag was now moved 800 miles closer to Tokyo.

Sadly, in the early morning of February 23, while "mopping up" enemy holdouts on the north side of Parry Island, our Hometown Hero Corporal Paul W. Sjursen, as the leader of a machine gun squad, was killed in action, making him one of the last Americans to die in the battle. He was only 22 years old. US casualties on Parry included 73 dead and missing, plus 261 wounded. Of the 3500 Marines and infantry involved in the entire operation, about 1 in 10 perished. The fanatical Japanese forces lost 3380. Only 105 surrendered.

The Navy Seabees, a construction force, quickly turned battle-torn Eniwetok Atoll into an

island headquarters. Construction started on Engebi Island within hours of the victory at Parry Island. With the latest military architecture making its debut in the early 1940's, Quonset huts became hospitals, command centers and soldier housing. A 6,800 by 400 foot runway with dual taxiways was completed by March 11th. It was capable of handling the large B-29 Superfortress bombers that could not use aircraft carriers. The most advance aircraft repair and maintenance facility in the region was also created. The sacrifices made to take this coral ring proved vital to the war effort. The US now had dominance in the area with this forward base.

Paul's body was initially interred on Japtan Island in a temporary military cemetery provided for those who perished during the seizure of the atoll. Some accounts claim Paul died on Japtan. However, it was unoccupied by the Japanese at the time of the battle and was taken without a shot. Corporal Sjursen's wartime memorial was held at the Cranford Methodist Church. Brother Clifford travelled across the country to be with his family for the service. Later, Paul's remains were placed in a mausoleum in Hawaii near Schofield Barracks, and in 1947 the remains were moved to Beverly National Cemetery in Beverly, New Jersey (Burlington County).

Paul had left behind at 1 Oak Lane his mom and dad, Leonora and Halvadan, and his three brothers: Herbert, who is now 101 years old and living in New Mexico; Ralph, who became a Methodist minister; and Clifford, who recently died at the age of 99. Clifford attained the rank of lieutenant colonel before retiring from the US Air Force Reserve. Our Cranford 86 committee attended his memorial service this July in Fanwood, in the hope of learning more about our honoree's life. We had a chance to meet some of his family and experience Norwegian hospitality and customs that are still practiced today.

Corporal Paul Warren Sjursen was a great American and one of our Cranford 86.

For more links and pictures and maps go to Cranford86.org

If you know anyone on our list of 86 and can help us find pictures and accounts of their lives, please contact me. We want to talk to you. If you'd like to have volume 1 of our first 12 Hometown Heroes, please call me, Don Sweeney (908) 272-0876. Visit Cranford86.org for all of the 15 stories we have told so far.



(above) Quonset hut on Eniwetok Island, note sign "Eniwetok Yacht club".



(above) The morning of February 23rd on Parry Island, when machine gun squad leader Corporal Paul Sjursen was killed in action. Note the machine gun and fixed bayonets as Marines "mop up" the area finding any hiding Japanese soldiers in the miles of trenches and tunnels. For all we know, this could have been Cpl. Sjursen's unit.



(above) Marines of the 22nd Regiment approach the sandy shores of the Eniwetok Island, July 19th, 1944.



LVT Amphibious tanks (new US battle hardware) come ashore on Eniwetok.



(above) Paul W. Sjursen's Gravestone at Beverly National Cemetery in NJ, near Philadelphia.



(above) The Cranford Police Department's new vehicle designs feature a gold police seal that was previously used on Township police cars from the 1960's through 1991.

CITIZENS ACADEMY NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

The Cranford Police Department will be holding the 7th session of the Citizens Police Academy in September 2018. The Citizens Academy is part of the ongoing effort for the Cranford Police Department and the community to work together and develop a lasting relationship. Applicants must be at least 21 years of age and either live in or work in Cranford. Academy students will receive classroom lectures and hands on demonstrations in many areas of interest, including traffic enforcement, crime scene investigations, motor vehicle stops, and much more. Students will also have the opportunity to participate in a ride along with a Cranford Police Officer. Weekly class sessions are two hours long and have been tentatively scheduled to meet Thursday evenings beginning on September 13th and ending on November 8th.

To download an application please visit the Cranford Police Department website cranfordnj.org/police-department and look under the forms tab. Applications must be received by September 6th. Instructions on how to submit the applications are on the application.

For more information please contact Lieutenant Chris Polito:

908-272-2222 or c-polito@cranfordnj.org.

CRANFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT UNVEILS NEW POLICE CAR DESIGN

The Cranford Police Department is paying tribute to fallen officer Patrolman Robert F. Hand with its new vehicle design, which also incorporates a gold police seal that was previously used on Township police cars from the 1960's through 1991.

According to Police Chief Ryan Greco, "We wanted to integrate modern and classic aspects of law enforcement into the new design."

Today, the Cranford Police Department fleet, which consists primarily of Ford Police Interceptor Utilities, incorporates the traditional black and white police vehicle paint scheme with bold gold lettering. In addition, Patrolman Robert F. Hand, who died in the line of duty on February 11, 1975, is being remembered by a badge memorial decal affixed on the rear tailgate of each police car.

The design is being implemented on older vehicles as well as new cars being rotated into service. Captain Joseph Van Bergen was primarily responsible for the new design and has been instrumental in the upfitting of Cranford's police vehicles since the 1990's.

"I wanted to keep the design clean and simple, while incorporating symbols of the department's traditions," stated Captain Van Bergen.

For those looking for a closer look of the new design, the Cranford Police Department plans on having a vehicle on display for this year's National Night Out scheduled for August 7, 2018.



(above) The new vehicle designs also include a badge memorial decal affixed on the rear tailgate in honor of Patrolman Robert F. Hand, who died in the line of duty on February 11, 1975.

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CRANFORD COUPLE TO CHAIR NONPROFIT GALA

Bobbi and Craig Anderson support CASA of Union County

Last fall, Bobbi and Craig Anderson were among several hundred guests at the Foster the Dream Gala fundraiser for Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Union County, a volunteer-powered organization that protects best interests of Union County's abused, neglected or abandoned children removed from home and placed in foster care. By evening's end, the Cranford couple says they felt "incredibly moved" by the plight of these child-victims in their own community, and were determined to help do something about it.

Less than a year later, the Andersons are doing just that, as benefit chairs for this year's upcoming gala on Friday, November 2, 2018, at the newly renovated Gran Centurions in Clark. Guests will enjoy dinner, dancing, drinks, silent and live auctions, wine pull, mystery-prize bags and presentation of both the Dream-Keeper Award for Outstanding Volunteerism and Honorable Jo-Anne B. Spatola Dream-Maker Award.

Bobbi, a real estate agent with Keller Williams in Westfield, and Craig, a senior relationship manager with Brazilian bank Itaú Unibanco in Manhattan, have three children, two daughters and a son, ranging in age from high school sophomore to college sophomore. Their Cranford roots run deep; Craig was raised there and the train station is dedicated to his father, Richard, who served as director of NJ Transit's Commuter Division.

Bobbi said, "With everything happening in the

world, and the situation with immigrant children, it's especially rewarding to be able to give hands-on help to kids right here at your feet. It's a problem many don't realize is there." She added, "Craig and I have good friends who have fostered and adopted, and we've admired that; CASA is a way to give something to the kids out there, whether time or money. Just stepping up to help."

Marla Higginbotham, CASA's executive director, said, "I am elated the Andersons are so fully on board, not only in their role as benefit chairs, but in their understanding of our work and mission, and the need for those able to step up to do so. They're a wonderful example of working within their own community to make a difference. The gala is always a great time, and as the nonprofit's premier fundraising event, its success is crucial to ensuring we continue not only to serve the fragile youth we do, but grow and train more members of the community to serve more children."

Since 2005, CASA of Union County has recruited, trained, supervised and supported volunteers to advocate for abused, neglected and abandoned children placed in foster homes or residential facilities. There are nearly 600 Union County youth in care, and half are still in need of CASA volunteers to be their constant and protect their best interests. For gala tickets or sponsorship opportunities, reach Phyllis Dunlop at 908-293-8141. To learn more about becoming a CASA volunteer, reach Courtney Green at 908-293-8136.



(above l-r) This year's Foster the Dream Gala dinner chairs, Bobbi and Craig Anderson of Cranford.



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CRANFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT YOUTH POLICE ACADEMY GRADUATION



(above) Cranford Youth Police Academy Class of 2018.

The twelfth class of the Cranford Police Department Youth Police Academy graduated on Friday, June 29, 2018 after completing a one-week course designed to expose them to the functions of the police department.

The academy program, designed to bridge the gap between the members of the police department and the youth of Cranford, included 64 cadets from Cranford between the ages of 11 and 14. "This unique opportunity provided our students with a greater understanding of the inner workings of a police department, as well as policies and procedures, as taught by the Law Enforcement professionals themselves," said Cranford Police Chief Ryan Greco.

Each academy day started with one hour of physical fitness and military drill practice led by Patrolman Daniel Donnerstag followed by classroom lectures and demonstrations. Detective Steven D'Ambola coordinated training sessions designed to familiarize the cadets with the roles of Cranford police officers, as well as the functions of various county and state law enforcement agencies. During the week, cadets received classroom lectures and practical exercises on police department structure, patrol operations, motor vehicle stops, investigative techniques, DWI, first aid/CPR, firearms safety, gang awareness, and traffic investigations.

Demonstrations were presented by the Cranford Police Department's Water Rescue Unit, Firearms Unit, Investigative Division, and Traffic Bureau. Additional presentations were made by the Cranford Fire Department Emergency Medical Services, United States Marine Corps, New Jersey Transit Police Department, New Jersey Office of Homeland Security & Preparedness, Union County Sheriff's K-9 and Crime Scene Units, Union County Bomb Squad, Union County SWAT, Union County Prosecutor's Office, and U.S. Homeland Security Investigations.

More than 200 family and friends of the cadets attended the graduation ceremony held at the Cranford Community Center. Chief Ryan Greco, Captain Joseph Van Bergen, and academy instructor Patrolman Steven D'Ambola led the graduation ceremonies. During the ceremony, family and friends were given an overview of the Youth Academy Program. The highlight of the

graduation was a video and slide show depicting the weeklong training experience. All graduating

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POLICE "B HARD HEADED" RAFFLE WINNER

In May 2018, the Cranford Police Department and Children's Specialized Hospital Safe Kids Union County teamed up to launch the "B Hard Headed" campaign. The campaign was a safety initiative aimed at using positive reinforcement as a way to educate the importance of helmet safety and brain injury prevention.

Children in Cranford who were seen by police practicing safe behaviors, like wearing their bicycle helmet, were issued a summons redeemable for a free slice of pizza at a local pizza establishment. In addition, the summons entered the child into a raffle for a new bicycle which was donated by Children's Specialized Hospital.

This year's lucky raffle winner was 7-year-old Owen Wolfe of Cranford. Owen was caught wearing his bicycle helmet riding along North Union Avenue by Patrolman Kelly Rieder. Owen and his family picked up the new bicycle just in time to enjoy it for the summer.



(above l-r) Amelia Wolfe, Chris Wolfe, D/Sgt. Eugene Perrotta, Owen Wolfe, Det. Steven D'Ambola. Owen Wolfe was the winner of the "B Hard Headed" raffle, a program to encourage children to wear helmets.

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ANNUAL NATIONAL NIGHT OUT SET FOR TUES., AUGUST 7

The Cranford Police Department will be participating in the 35th Annual National Night Out on Tuesday, August 7 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. in Patrolman Robert F. Hand Plaza and on the front lawn of the Cranford Police Department headquarters.

The event provides an excellent opportunity for residents to interact with members of the Cranford Police Department in an informal setting. Residents and visitors may also obtain information about the Department's many youth, educational, safety and public awareness programs.

Numerous police and emergency vehicles will be on display, including marked police cars, command post truck, police motorcycle, emergency services unit utility vehicles, and equipment from the Union County Office of Emergency Management, New Jersey Transit Police Department, and Norfolk Southern Railroad Police Department. Public Safety personnel will be on hand to answer questions or demonstrate equipment.

For the 10th year in a row, a blood drive will also be held during National Night Out.

A DJ, face painter, and magician will be on site to provide entertainment for children and adults, and AAA and other organizations will be handing out literature and giveaways.



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CRANFORD KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS PRESENT SCHOLARSHIPS

At the June General Meeting, the Cranford Knights of Columbus presented scholarships to 7 students. Andrew Tobin received the Monsignor Louis Fimiani Memorial Award and Elizabeth Walter received the Christine Bagniewski Memorial Award. The other scholarship winners were Hunter Brogan, Andrew Noesner, Jill Valenzano, Josephanie Marcasi, Elizabeth Cappucci, Garrett Kennedy and Emily Wilson.

This year, the Council distributed \$7,000.00 in scholarship monies.

The Council would like to thank the Scholarship Committee chaired by Ed Bagniewski.

The Cranford Knights of Columbus is a Catholic Men's Fraternal Organization dedicated to our four core principles, Charity, Unity, Fraternity and Patriotism. The Cranford Council

supports many worthy charities and civic causes locally, state-wide and nationally and is committed to be a viable part of our community.

For information about joining the Cranford Council, please contact either

our Grand Knight Wally Shackell
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(above) Scholarship winners with Grand Knight Wally Shackell and members of the Cranford Knights of Columbus Scholarship Committee.

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“SHINING STARS” MAKES TRIUMPHANT DEBUT

With a crowd of over 1,000 packed into the historic Union County Arts Center, the Shining Stars cast put on a spectacular performance, singing and dancing their way through “Music From the Decades” — which featured songs from the 20’s to today while totally engaging the audience at every turn.

The show, which starred 30 special needs individuals from around Union County, took the stage with their high school volunteer buddies and rocked the house from start to finish. The well-conceived concept kept everyone engaged throughout the show, topped off by the finale, which featured Gloria Estefan hits Get On Your Feet, Conga and Turn the Beat Around, where the cast joined the audience for the exciting finish.

U.C.P.A.C. Executive Director Brian Remo could not have been more impressed with the cast performances.

“This event and these amazing young artists have inspired not only the surrounding community, but each other, in what was truly one of the most memorable nights this stage has ever seen.”

Each decade was represented by several songs, where the entire cast took part in a big dance ensemble. The show was highlighted by solo acts from each member of the special needs cast who performed an array of hits, from the Beatles “All You Need Is Love” to Frank Sinatra’s “My Way” to Bobby Darin’s “Mack the Knife,” which garnered one of many standing ovations throughout the evening.

The 7th annual “Evening of Shining Stars” was an idea conceived and developed by Cranford resident Sally Curci, who back in 2012 had the idea of giving local special needs children the opportunity to shine on stage through the performing arts by putting on a full show. Since then, the show has become a must-see event, leading to their recent record-breaking show.

“While all of our previous shows have been wonderful, we wanted our cast to have the chance to perform on a professional stage and the Union County Performing Arts Center was the perfect venue,” said Sally Curci. “I’m so proud of every one of our stars. It was like being on Broadway. The crowd was amazing and the performances

were wonderful. It was a perfect night.”

Master of Ceremonies Ryan Fay was masterful again, entertaining the audience in between acts while making sure the show moved smoothly. Ryan has been the emcee from the beginning, and his wit and humor continues to charm the audience. His brother, Sean Fay, had everyone singing to Sweet Caroline in another great moment.

Along with Director Sally Curci, the show was guided by Co-Director Nicole Greene, Sally’s daughter, and Assistant Director Angie Sandoukas, who was a former volunteer “buddy” who returned to join the Shining Stars staff. All three are special needs teachers.

“This was an incredible night,” noted Nicole Greene. “For many of us, it’s our favorite time of the year. The performers put their hearts and souls into rehearsals for months, and to see them shine on stage even brighter every year is absolutely incredible. It is amazing to see how passionate the audience is, and how proud the performers are of themselves. I feel so lucky just to be a part of this experience.”

The show’s Executive Producer and Shining Stars CEO, Mike Curci, is a television broadcaster and producer who also runs the day-to-day operations of Shining Stars Network, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization which shines the light on the special needs community through the performing arts and various events throughout the year. The annual show is the biggest highlight.

“I am so proud of every one of our cast members and the entire Shining Stars team of volunteers,” said Curci. “Each and every one of them shares in the success of this show. They truly inspire us every day. It was an emotional night watching them perform in front of a big crowd at an iconic venue. They proved they belonged there.”

Shining Stars would like to thank the U.C.P.A.C. staff, who helped them through the process of putting on a show of this magnitude.

“It was incredible to see this show come to life after four months of rehearsals,” continued Mike Curci. “Everyone worked extremely hard. I was

(continued on page 21)

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"SHINING STARS" (continued)

especially moved by the audience response. They were wonderful. We're honored that so many people came to see our stars. And of course, this couldn't have been done without the generosity of our sponsors and boosters who helped make this happen and our dedicated parents who helped in so many ways. It was a night we'll always remember."

Members of the cast include: Joe Bacque, Gina Berry, Alexis Cassino, Alejandro Colon, Brian Curci, Courtney Curci, Aidan Dolan, Andrew Downey, Ryan Fay, Sean Fay, Adam Fleissner, Bret Fleming, Aidan Flynn, Jessie Gaeta, Elizabeth Garcia, Meghan Lamar, Caitlin Madden, Brian McAuliffe, Dan Montealegre, Josh Moreines, Simone Palermo, Melissa Pearl, Gerard Russomanno, Alyssa Santos, Andrew Seiler, Nicole Serkin, Garrett Smith, Dominick Vito, and Mark Zulauf.

This year's volunteer high school "buddies" were Johnny Bush, Diego Colon, Tim Eimer,

McKenna Flynn, Abby Heller, Kayla Hooey, Judith Kikikis, Mark Lynch, Kelly McAuliffe, Izzy Pinto, Peter Roefaro, Kelly Ryan, Hannah Scepkowski, Leah Scepkowski, and Sarah Scepkowski,

Special thanks to Jamie Greene, Beth Wolfe, Jim & Kathy Parlapiano, Amy Downey, Johanna Hathaway, Christina Smith, Maria Palermo, Joe Silano, Derek Thorn, Andrew Iocavano, Megan Convery, Megan Santarelli and all the parents who contributed their time and efforts, and thank you to Lori Fleissner for her outstanding photography.

Shining Stars Network is also excited to announce the return of Camp Shine, a two-week performing arts camp for special needs individuals ages 10 and up. The camp will take place at the Fanwood Presbyterian Church from August 21-30. Please email ShiningStarsNetwork@gmail.com for more information.



(above) The cast of the Shining Stars Network's "Music From the Decades" drew in a crowd of 1,000 people for their 7th annual performance. The Shining Stars Network shines a light on the talents of local special needs children through performing arts.

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The Cranford Recreation and Parks Department is pleased to announce the winners of the following games and contests:

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10 – 13 Years Old:

- 1st Place: Gabriel & Rachel Westervelt
2nd Place: Sam & Max Slayton
3rd Place: Murray & Jones

14 – 20 Years Old:

- 1st Place: Charlotte Van Why & Gracie Powasnik
2nd Place: Jackie Romero & Abby Giannobile
3rd Place: Will Hoffman & Brian Kealey

21 Years and Older:

- 1st Place: Louis Bock & Paul Starkey
2nd Place: Gavin Murray & Kevin Trotter
3rd Place: Jack Carroll & Johnny Bush

Mother & Child:

- 1st Place: Nick & Tracey Macchi
2nd Place: Eileen & Kelly McAuliffe
3rd Place: Elizabeth & Mark Lynch

Father & Child:

- 1st Place: John & Jacob Snover
2nd Place: Chris & Sam Slayton
3rd Place: Mike & James Ganley

Ma & Pa:

- 1st Place: Kristen & Chris Slayton
2nd Place: Elizabeth Lynch & John Snover
3rd Place: Bob & Eileen McAuliffe

MARATHON 13 – 17 YR. OLD

- 1st Place: Will Hoffman, Brian Kealey & Pat Ganley
2nd Place: Patrick Coates, Justin Marko & Rob Bobko
3rd Place: n/a

MARATHON 18 AND OVER

- 1st Place: Louis Bock, Paul Starkey & Paul Buonaguro
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