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YMCA PARTNERS WITH COMMUNITY ACTION ORGANIZATION TO PROVIDE SAFETY AROUND WATER PROGRAM

The Gateway Family YMCA – Rahway Branch partnered with the Rahway Community Action Organization to provide Safety Around Water, a program to engage and educate parents about the importance of water safety skills and provide more of America's youth access to water safety lessons.

Safety Around Water is designed for all children, but it especially targets underserved populations who are at higher risk for drowning than other populations. According to data from the USA Swimming Foundation, 70 percent of African American and 60 percent of Hispanic children cannot swim, compared to just 40 percent of Caucasian children. While fatal drowning is a concern for all children – it's the second-leading cause of unintentional injury-related death for children ages one to 14 years old – African American children ages 5 to 14 are three times more likely to drown than their white counterparts.

Through Safety Around Water, parents and caregivers are encouraged to help their children learn fundamental water safety and swimming skills. During the eight-day course, children learn how to respond if they find themselves in unexpected water situations -- from how to reach the water's surface if they submerge to safely reaching a pool's edge or exiting any body of water.

"In many underserved communities, staying safe around water means keeping kids away from water, but water safety and swimming are important life skills in the growth and development of all children," said Krystal R. Canady, CEO, The Gateway Family YMCA. "All children deserve access to water safety resources that not only could save their lives, but enrich them with an outlet for fun, healthy activity."

In achieving its goal to make swim lessons more accessible for all children, this Spring The Gateway Family YMCA – Rahway Branch partnered with local community organization, Rahway Community Action Organization to provide Safety Around Water to children in their care. The Rahway Community Action Program visited the YMCA, bringing 27 preschool children with the intention of equipping them with the tools they needed to be confident in the water.

All of the children were able to learn safety techniques to provide confidence to act in case they accidentally fell in the water. Despite several of the preschoolers having had previous fears associated with the water and swimming, all 27 were able to leave the program with a wealth of knowledge and newfound confidence in themselves. During the Safety



(above, l-r) Aneesha Ghaly, Director, Rahway Community Action Organization and Rodger D. Koerber, Branch Executive Director, The Gateway Family YMCA – Rahway.

Around Water program, all participants are encouraged to gain levels of independence in the water as they continue to develop their skills. Several children enjoyed swimming all by themselves by the end of the 8 week program.

The Y introduced the concept of group swim lessons in 1909. Now, each year in 2,200 pools across the country, the Y teaches more than a million children from all backgrounds invaluable water safety and swim skills. Here in Northern Middlesex County and Eastern Union County, The Gateway Family YMCA over 4,000 children water safety and swimming each year. Through Safety Around Water, the Y hopes to further bridge cultural and access gaps that can prevent some children from learning important water safety skills.

Families interested in learning more about Safety Around Water and how to enroll their child in The Gateway Family YMCA swimming and water safety classes should visit tgfymca.org or contact the Five Points Branch 908-688-9622 or Rahway Branch 732-388-0057.

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Fax: (908) 709-9209

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VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO HELP CLEAN UP THE RAHWAY RIVER

On Saturday, September 8th, 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., join the Rahway River Watershed Association, the Central Jersey Stream Team, the Rahway Library and the Rahway Environmental Commission to help clean up the Rahway River behind City Hall and the Library.

Don't like to see tires, shopping carts and other debris littering the bed of the Rahway River behind the library at low tide? Join us for a fun event where we will get down and dirty to get that stuff out! The Central Jersey Stream Team will come to town from Somerset County to provide their expertise in this type of cleanup. Let's show them that Rahway Community Spirit by providing a great turnout!

Meet in back of Rahway Public Library – 2 City Hall Plaza, Rahway, NJ, at 10:45 a.m.

- No registration is required!
- All ages are welcome!
- Please wear a long sleeved shirt, and long pants you won't mind getting dirty or wet.
- High boots or waders will also be appreciated.
- Bags and gloves will be provided.

Lunch will be provided for volunteers after the clean up. Sponsored by the Rahway Public Library.

For food donations contact Tim Valente at 732-675-1426. For general information contact Clea Carchia at 908-892-7229.

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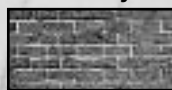
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Rah-Con is the Rahway Comic Book Expo at Saint Thomas Church on Saturday, August 11. Featuring vendors, artists, writers, costume groups. Guests will include Philip McNulty from Marvel Comics, Neil Vokes, Paris Cullins, Derwyn Roberson, George Vega, Matt Parton, Mark Poulton, colorist Tom Smith, Dangerous Dan, Carter Cosplay and two Star Wars clubs in action.

Admission is \$3 for adults, children under 12 are admitted free. Show hours are 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The church is located at 1410 Saint Georges Avenue, corner of Church Street, Rahway, NJ. More information visit, jerseyshorecomicbookshow.com.

INVENTION CONVENTION AT ROOSEVELT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



(above) Roosevelt Elementary School in Rahway held their 5th annual Invention Convention in June. Pictured is 5th grader Lourdes Nunez presenting her idea to make it easier to blend markers for her artwork. 5th grade teacher Mrs. Natalie Polanin organizes this event each year in which students design and present their inventions to parents and students. The Invention Convention was well attended and perhaps one of these inventions will come to fruition soon.



AMERICAN GOLDFINCH (PART TWO) MATING & RAISING THEIR YOUNG

In early spring the American Goldfinch male undergoes one of the most dramatic color changes of all finches, from its winter plumage of olive green with black markings to its brilliant mating feathers of yellow with black wings, black tail and black forehead.

For back yard bird feeders it is amazing to watch this transformation take place. The males feathers change in blotches rather than one area at a time.

The male bonds with the female in late winter and then the male's feathers change early in the spring. In spite of this, goldfinches are the last birds in our area to mate, waiting until July or August. This delay is due to the goldfinches' incredible reliance on 'Thistle plants', a family of hardy native plants that bloom in midsummer. The goldfinch uses the cottony fluff of the thistle plant as the main substance in the construction of the nest and its seeds are the main food source for feeding the young.

The nest building begins in late June or July. The nest is built a few feet off the ground with soft materials and includes twigs and sticks found nearby. The nest is constructed so tightly that it can hold water and is held in place with spider webbing or other sticky substances.

After the nest is constructed the pair leave it for a week or so and return when the timing is right. When they return the female lays from two to seven eggs and incubates them for fifteen days while the male guards the nest and feeds her.

Once the chicks are born the male and female change places. The male stays with the young while the females guard the nest, forages for food and returns to feed the chicks by spitting up undigested food into their mouths. Goldfinches are almost totally seed and grain eaters. This means they extract enough protein from the seeds to promote the rapid healthy growth of the young. Almost all other birds feed their young insects for their high protein level.*

After eight days the young are more independent and can leave the nest while staying close to the parents. After fourteen days the young can fly but remain close to the parents three to four weeks to learn the skills they need



(above) Past President of The Rahway Garden Club, James Keane, has been researching and answering garden questions since 1995. Visit 'Keane Gardener' blog at: keanegardener.blogspot.com

for survival.

For this reason it's good to have feeders ready with black oil seeds so the parents can teach the young how to use them. Winter bird feeders have become a major source of food, especially during severe winter snow storms.

If all goes well the female will now leave her young with the male and seek a new mate to have a second clutch in the same year.

*The Brown Headed Cowbird, a black bird with a brown head, lays their eggs in other bird's nests for the host to feed and raise. Cowbirds hatched in goldfinch nests hatch, but without the insect diet starve to death before fledging.

Enjoy the summer season,

James



(above) After the eggs hatch, the male goldfinch takes over the care of the clutch while the female protects the nest and feeds her family.



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FREDDIE SPENCER – “THE FASTEST MAN IN THE WORLD”

Submitted by Al Shipley, City Historian and Rahway Library Research Consultant

During the bicycle racing craze of the early 1900s and into the 1920s and 30s, sprint and distance racing were extremely popular and the riders themselves achieved equal notoriety to the great athletes of other professional sports. Freddie Spencer, a three-time American sprint champion, winner of six six-day races, and a holder of six world records, was one of the riders burning up the professional courses and velodromes throughout the country. By the end of his career, the long-time Rahway resident (1935-1992) had earned the moniker, “the fastest man in the world.”

The stories surrounding Freddie Spencer are made from the same fabrics that weave the great legends of other sport’s heroes. Freddie became interested in cycling in his early teens while working in a small store in Plainfield, New Jersey. Each morning before school, he would ride to the post office for stamps and letters for his employer. One morning, while peddling on his errand, two cyclists went flying past him. His youthful curiosity got the best of him, so he turned his bike around and hurried after them. When he finally caught up with the pair he was bewildered when one asked, “Where might I get a bloody glass of milk?” He soon understood that the men were only asking for a plain glass of milk, so he took them to a nearby dairy. He would spend the better part of the morning talking to the strangers and eventually forgot where he was supposed to be. Having failed to complete his errand and being late for school, he asked his new friends if they would return with him to explain what happened. One can imagine Freddie’s astonishment when upon entering the store, the employees rushed past him to greet the strangers. Unbeknown to Freddie, he had been in the presence of Jackie Clarke and

Walter Rutt, two of the greatest bike riders of the first two decades of the twentieth century.

Clarke, who was the Australian cycling champion, and Rutt, the German champion, had been in the area training for an upcoming race. Both champions were struck by Freddie’s serious interest and enthusiasm for cycling and invited Freddie to train along with them. Using a bicycle given to him by an old Irishman who worked in the same store, Freddie quickly learned the basics of competitive cycling from the two professionals. Little did anyone know that the young teen would one day shatter records that his tutors would never come close to reaching.

At the age of twenty, Freddie joined the amateur ranks in 1923, and won forty-seven two mile races out of the forty-eight he entered. After winning twenty-eight in a row, he came in second on a rain-soaked field and then went on to win nineteen more in succession. On one occasion, he rode all the way from New Jersey to Ohio on his bike to compete in a race. When the judges heard of the boy’s trip, they thought it only fair to give him a twelve minute head start. As it turned out, the judges would have made a more interesting race had they held Freddie back for several minutes. After he broke the tape, the next rider didn’t finish until sixteen minutes later.

Freddie became a professional in 1924 and won the U.S. Professional Sprint Championships in 1925, 1928, and 1929. In 1925, he set a record that no other bicycle racer has ever equaled by winning the National Track Sprint Championship and two six-day races all within the same year. Over the course of his career he set six world records: 1/10 mile, 1/2 mile, 10 mile, 15 mile, 20 mile, and 25 mile.

Having become one of the most famous

cyclists in the world, he was invited by sport’s promoter Tex Richert to attend the 1927 “Kings’ of Sports” Banquet held in New York City to honor the world champions of all sports. Along with Spencer, the honorees included Babe Ruth (Baseball), Johnny Weissmuller (Swimming), Bobby Jones (Golf), Bill Tilden (Tennis), Gene Tunney (Boxing), Bill Cook (Hockey), and Charlie Winter (Cycling).

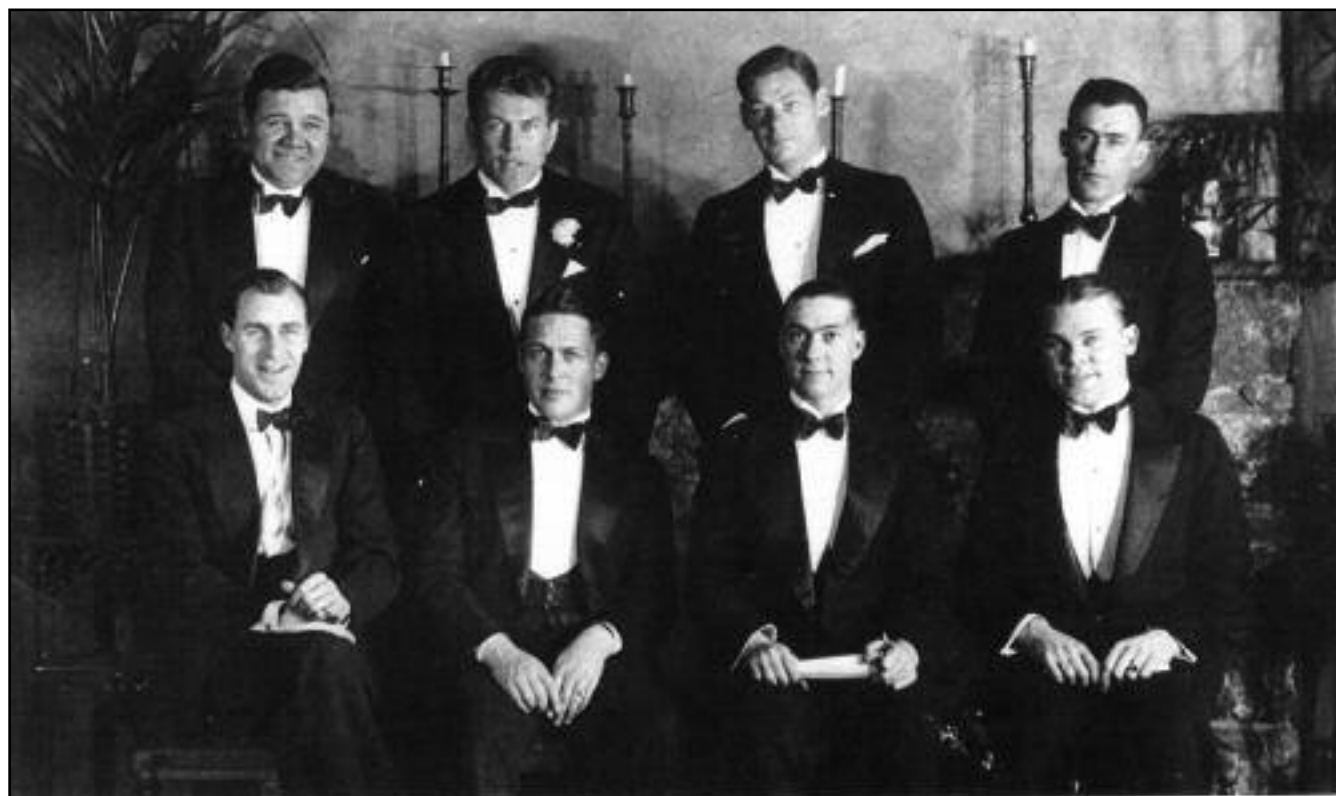
By the 1930s, people wanted to find out just how fast Freddie could go. Paced by a customized Pierce-Arrow, a speed test was conducted at Belmeade, New Jersey, where Freddie was able to keep up with the automobile whose speedometer read ninety eight-miles per hour. It was never known if he could have gone over one hundred miles per hour because the auto’s speedometer did not give a reading over ninety-eight.

Two years before his death in 1992, Freddie was inducted into the United States Bicycling Hall of Fame, an institution founded in 1987. Freddie was selected as a member of the fourth class of inductees (1990) and was the fifteenth cyclist overall to be so honored. Today, the Hall, located in Davis, California, pays tribute to over 130 Americans who achieved tremendous success in racing or who have enhanced the sport of cycling through their life-long efforts.

Freddie Spencer brought bike racing to Rahway in 1958 when he chaired a committee that hosted a fifty mile race as part of the city’s Centennial Celebration. The event, with his name attached, attracted seventy-five international racers to the city. The race was so popular to both bikers and spectators that the city continued to sponsor the “Freddie Spencer Holiday at Home Bike Race” each Fourth of July through the 1960s and 70s.



(above) “Holiday At Home” Program from July 4, 1975.



(above, l-r) Famous athlete pose for a photo at the 1927 “Kings of Sports” Banquet. Front row: Bill Tilden, Bobby Jones, Freddie Spencer, and Charlie Winter. Back row: Babe Ruth, Gene Tenney, Johnny Weissmuller, and Bill Cook.



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William G Davis, 80, of Vero Beach, Florida, formerly of Rahway passed away Monday July 16, 2018 in the Indian River Medical Center, Vero Beach, Florida.

Born in Pittston Pa, he moved to Hillside, NJ in 1945 and later to Rahway in 1969 where he lived for 42 years before retiring to Vero Beach in 2011.

He was a licensed funeral director and owner of the Pettit-Davis Funeral Home, Rahway for over 40 years before retiring.

Bill was a member of the Board of Directors of Rahway Savings for 35 years before retiring. He also served on the Board of Directors of Rahway Hospital Hospice for many years.

He was a communicant of St. Mary's RC Church Rahway where he served on the Parish Council and was a Eucharistic Minister. He was a member of Rahway Council #1146 Knights of Columbus where he was honored as Knights of the Year in 1999.

Mr. Davis was a USMC veteran serving from 1957-1959. He was a member of American Legion Post #5, Rahway, The United States Marine Corp. League, Avenel, NJ, BPOE #1075 Rahway Elks and the Rahway Honorary PBA where he served as President from 1998-1999.

He was a member of many other organizations including: The Rahway Library Board of Directors, The Rahway Yacht Club, and The Monsignor CJ Cane Division of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, Rahway, NJ.

Mr. Davis coached Rahway Youth Soccer for many years and was awarded Coach of the Year in 1980.

He was predeceased by his brother James Davis in 2017.

Surviving is his beloved wife of 53 years Mary (nee Duhig), he was the devoted father of Mary Pat Davis, Cathleen Thyne (Kevin) and William G Davis, Jr (Mandy), he was also loved by 7 grandchildren: Anna, Kenny, Jack, Nora, Erin, Jimmy and Kate.



William G Davis

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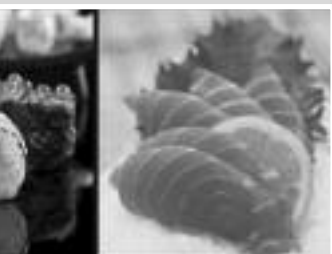
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FREE SUMMER CONCERTS THURSDAYS IN AUGUST



(above) August 2nd VoicePlay.



(above) August 9th Steel Union
with Shotgun Wedding.



(above) August 16th Brother Josephus
and the Love Revolution.



(above) August 23rd Sheila E.

The Mayor's Summer Concert Series returns with four free outdoor concerts to be presented this August. The concerts will take place outside the Union County Performing Arts Center, 1601 Irving Street, Rahway, NJ, each Thursday night in August. All shows will begin at 7:30 p.m. In the event of inclement weather, the concerts will be held inside the Union County Performing Arts Center on the venue's mainstage.

The City of Rahway welcomes all to attend and join the free family fun!

The series kicked off on Thursday, August 2nd with VoicePlay. The cast of VoicePlay has taken the timeless sound of vocal music and turned it completely on its head. Re-imagined as a full stage show, amazing, humorous, and vertigo-inducing harmonies pepper VoicePlay's music-without-music sound. Their performance ping-pongs between eras and styles, channeling the breadth of the musical landscape, and lacing it with inventive and often hilarious on-stage theatrics. Fit for all ages, VoicePlay's recordings and concerts are an impossible to miss hit which have to be heard to be believed. Day One, Rahway's local 90's-2000's rock cover band, opened the show.

On Thursday, August 9th, Steel Union will perform with Shotgun Wedding. Steel Union is a fresh country trio, made up of Rachel Potter, Donny Fallgatter and Josh Matheny. These three friends are making waves in Nashville and across the country, hooking audiences with their catchy melodies, impressive vocals, and infectious harmonies. Though they have only been playing together for three years, they joined forces with fruitful careers behind each of them. Shotgun Wedding isn't from the South. They're two of New York City's finest professional musicians who got together out of reverence for country music's lineage and out of a desire to further the tradition. On Shotgun Wedding's debut release,

South Of Somewhere, the duo reimagines country's genre geography with swaggering musicianship and honest accounts of city living.

The third concert this year will feature Brother Josephus and the Love Revolution on August 16th. Brother Josephus and the Love Revolution has been on a musical mission to make the world a more righteous place. The two main visionaries of this 12-piece explosion of love - Brother Josephus and his eccentric cohort, the Right Reverend Dean Dawg - dip heavily into a gumbo rich with the powerful rhythms of New Orleans, old school funk and soul, classic rock and a healthy dose of feel-good gospel music. BroJo combines all this with a message of righteousness, urging us towards acceptance and loving one another. When you combine the music and the message with a one-of-a-kind, high-energy stage spectacle, you got yourself a revolution on your hands. Taye McQueen, the 2017 ICON 2017 Winner, will open the event along with select members of the cast of RENT opening September 6, 2018 at the Hamilton Stage.

The last concert will be on August 23rd with Sheila E., an American percussionist, singer, author, and actress. She began her career in the mid-1970s as a percussionist and singer for The George Duke Band. After leaving the group in 1983, Sheila began a successful solo career, starting with her critically acclaimed debut album, which included the career-defining song, "The Glamorous Life". She became a mainstream solo star in 1985 following the success of the singles, "The Belle of St. Mark," "Sister Fate," and "A Love Bizarre," with the latter becoming one of her signature songs. She is commonly referred to as The Queen of Percussion. Miss Ohio will open the evening with their crunchy style of alternative rock.



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“SHINING STARS” MAKES TRIUMPHANT DEBUT ON UCPAC STAGE

Special needs talent show draws 1,000 for 7th annual event It was truly their night to shine!

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.

(Continued on page 13)



(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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“SHINING STARS” (Continued)

“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 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 Kikakis, 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. For more information please email ShiningStarsNetwork@gmail.com.

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Discovery Studio - Crochet Club

Thursdays, August 2 & 16 at 6:30 p.m.

Bring your hooks and yarn. Work on a project or learn a new technique! Program is free for teens and adults.

Friends' Group Meeting

The Friends of the Rahway Public Library will meet at the library at

7:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 9.

Readers Circle Book Club

Monday, August 20 at 2:00 p.m.

Join us for the discussion of *The Runaway Quilt* by Jennifer Chiaverini.

Third Thursday Movie

Thursday, August 16 at 1:00 p.m.

Red Sparrow (2018) R; 2h 20min; Drama, Mystery, Thriller starring Jennifer Lawrence, Joel Edgerton and Jeremy Irons.

Documentary Screening:

"Decoding the Weather Machine"

Saturday, August 25 at 11:00 a.m.

Join us for this special event made possible by WGBH/PBS. Discover what climate scientists believe may be causing extreme weather events occurring all around the globe.

Information, discussion, and refreshments.

TEEN EVENTS

Discovery Studio for Teens

Wednesday, August 1 at 2:00 p.m.

Decorate a blank book. Or make a notebook out of index cards. Join us for our last Libraries Rock activity. Be creative and have fun!

Teen Back to School Social

Back to School Meet-n-Greet for Teens! Fun, friends, music and food! Join Terry Jeter (relationship coach) in our café on

Monday, August 13 at 6:00 p.m.

Teen Screen Presents:

Monday, August 20 at 5:00 p.m.

Ready Player One (2018) PG-13; 2h 20min; Based on Ernest Cline's bestselling worldwide phenomenon. All are welcome.

CHILDREN'S EVENTS

Family Fun Night

Mondays 8/13, 8/20 & 8/27 at 6:30 p.m.

Bring your family to the library for stories, crafts, experiments, games and other fun! All ages.

Tween Scene

Tuesdays 8/21 & 8/28 at 3:00 p.m.

A different project for tweens each week! From slime making to cookie baking. Ages 8-12.

Toddler Time

Wednesdays 8/15, 8/22 & 8/29 at 10:30am.

We will be talking, singing, reading, writing and playing during this literacy readiness storytime. Ages birth-4.

Lego Club

Wednesdays 8/1, 8/8, 8/15 & 8/22 at 6:30 p.m.

Make something out of Legos and put it on display! Ages 5 and up.

Storytime on the Go at the Rahway Train Station Plaza

Thursdays 8/2, 8/9 & 8/16 at 11:30am.

Come on over to the Farmer's Market at the Rahway Train Station Plaza for an hour of stories and fun with a guest reader. All ages.

Toddlers Rock!

Fridays 8/17, 8/24 & 8/31 at 10:30am.

Explore different types of music, play instruments, and dance! Ages birth - 4.

Kids Movie

Fridays 8/17 & 8/24 at 2:00 p.m.

Enjoy a family friendly movie on the library's big screen. Refreshments provided. All ages.

Global Rhythms Dance Party

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"Add the excitement of colorful, culturally relevant fabrics and you've elevated basic school essentials into educational conversation pieces. The vibrant colors, patterns and textures of authentic African fabrics inspire creativity, so they're a great way to start the new school year," suggests Lisa Shepard Stewart, owner of the Cultured Expressions Sewing & Quilting Studio in Rahway. Smocks and aprons, lunch bags, covered journals, bookmarks, zipper cases and drawstring backpacks are topping this year's list of DIY school projects.

Of course, making time to sew in the back-to-school season can be a challenge. Take a creative shortcut by simply adding touches of the fabrics to existing garments -- this not only saves time, but can also extend the life of a garment for yet another school year.

Embellishing too-short legs on jeans with fabric print cuffs, or stitching a fabric print patch pocket to a favorite T-shirt or tote bag extends

their usage in a fun, easy way, in a matter of minutes.

In addition to selling Janome sewing machines, the studio is now scheduling private 90-minute sessions for those who already own a sewing machine, but have no clue of how to operate it. "Back-to-school time is the perfect time to take that machine out of the box and bring it in to learn how your sewing machine works. You even sew a simple mini-tote bag in the process. Then, you'll be ready to tackle some mending jobs, make new projects, and join in the fun of our fabrics, workshops and events," says Shepard Stewart.

The Studio is sharing free tips and instruction sheets for sewing various back-to-school projects (including a few gift ideas for teachers!) during August and September. Regular hours are Wed 4-8 pm; Thu 12-6 pm; Fri 12-6 pm and Sat 10-6 pm. Closed Mon and Tue. (Please Note: The Studio will be CLOSED Aug 8-12 and Sept 19-25.)

For details, just stop in at 1417 Main Street in Rahway, call 866-683-2568 (866-MUDCLOTH), or email info@CulturedExpressions.com.

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(above) Add the excitement of colorful, culturally relevant fabrics.



(above) Smocks and aprons, lunch bags, covered journals, bookmarks, zipper cases and drawstring backpacks are topping this year's list of DIY school projects.

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Late appointments are available by request.

“HOW VOLUNTEERING TRANSFORMED ME:” AN INTERVIEW WITH CARING CONTACT VOLUNTEER

Each year approximately 45,000 people die by suicide in the United States, 120 people each day, one person every 12 minutes. Though this tragically large number continues to increase annually, there is work being done to reverse this trajectory.

Caring Contact is an award-winning, volunteer-staffed crisis hotline and listening community. We compassionately serve those in emotional distress and educate our communities about the power of personal connection. In 2017, our volunteers responded to over 10,000 calls through our caring and crisis line. Contact Listeners are volunteers who listen to people in crisis over the phone. They receive 52 hours of listening and suicide awareness and intervention training before assisting people in need of support. Even after this rigorous training, most listeners are surprised by how volunteering transforms them. To give you a sense of their experience, here is an interview with a current Caring Contact volunteer listener (whose name is being withheld).

What is your professional background?

I am a recent college graduate. I studied Sociology and Psychology.

How would you describe your listening skills?

I would regard myself as a quiet listener. I know that probably sounds weird or maybe even obvious. But, after the training I realized how much talking I was doing when people were venting to me. Before I became a trained listener I don't think I realized how powerful the act of listening can be or how difficult it is sometimes. I used to be distracted when listening to people and I missed a lot. Through the training I've attached a real purpose to listening and listening well, which has made me better in a variety of aspects in my life.

Tell me about your training.

The training struck this balance between easing the volunteers into the material and also challenging people in ways that were a bit nerve-racking. I remember my first practice session where I was acting as the Listener. All I was supposed to do was listen and reflect on a feeling or two. This, honestly, turned out to be one of the most difficult role plays because all I wanted to

do was solve what seemed like an obvious problem to me, rather than just really listen to what the person was saying.

I found that the training applied to both the hotline and also my everyday life. I think everyone's family members and friends are grateful when a person takes this training. I also loved the growth of each volunteer, it is so clearly visible because of the practice sessions and utilization of the skills we learned - there is a lot of development throughout those 12 weeks.

Do you ever feel like you get a call you can't handle? How do you cope?

The first few crisis calls were really scary. I remember that I decided on those few phone calls to just be there and to sit with the person in this dark, dark hole. By the end of the call we had developed a safety plan and the person was safe in that moment. After these types of calls, I usually debrief with someone in the office or another volunteer who is working at the same time as me.

Also, there is a bell in the phone room which lets someone in the office know you need help. There was one instance when my phone call got disconnected because I was so shaken up and didn't know what to do. Janet Sarkos, the Executive Director at Caring Contact and a volunteer listener, came in and talked me through the call. It's things like that that make the overwhelming calls easier. It's really helpful to be surrounded by people who have had similar calls, speaking to them is a huge way of coping for me.

What types of calls are most challenging?

Any call that involves someone being really down, feeling stuck and alone. Those are hard calls. They aren't necessarily difficult to manage, but so many of these calls stick with me and I want to do more, to change their living situations and that's just not possible. I think the most difficult calls are those that end before it seems like we have reached a safe plan, or have made enough progress - this has happened before and it's really hard to let those calls go.

Which call was really memorable for you?

One of the most memorable calls was from a college student. We talked for about 45 minutes. He told me that he's never told anyone the things that he's told me during our phone call. He disclosed that if he had not picked up the phone and talked to me, that he was planning on running in front of a truck on the highway. Knowing that someone called and just by speaking to me for an hour felt like they could go on for one more day, that's very powerful.

How did becoming a listener change you?

Being a listener has opened my eyes to how many people are struggling, how many people think about suicide but don't tell those they are close to. I now feel comfortable asking those I am close to if they are struggling or thinking of suicide. That's something I never would have done if it hadn't been for this training and experience. I now know how powerful listening can be, just listening to another person. It can change their life.

Please visit our website, caringcontact.org, to find out more and how you can volunteer to save a life.



(above) A Caring Contact volunteer shares what she's experienced on the suicide prevention and crisis hotline.

UNIQUE TROUPE OF ACTORS THRILLED HUNDREDS WITH "ANNIE, JR."

Nearly 1,000 showgoers were thrilled with a very special production of "Annie, Jr." staged by the Community Access Unlimited (CAU) Community Players, a troupe of actors both with and without developmental disabilities. The musical was performed at the Rahway High School Center for Performing Arts from June 29-July 1, 2018.

Formed in 2012, the CAU Community Players empowers members with disabilities to perform alongside people from the wider community and to be seen for their talents rather than their disabilities.

The troupe is sponsored by Community Access Unlimited, a statewide nonprofit providing support programs and services to individuals with disabilities as well as youth served under the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to empower them to live independently in the community. CAU provides support in areas including housing, life-skills training, vocational skills, money management, health maintenance, education, advocacy and recreation.

"Annie, Jr." was the CAU Community Players' seventh annual production. Each year the troupe selects a play that represents CAU's message of inclusion, acceptance and self-advocacy. With an emphasis on each individual's value regardless of ability, the plays allow for a large cast so no one is denied an opportunity to participate.

"Annie, Jr." is based on the Little Orphan Annie comic strip and adapted from the Tony Award-winning musical. With equal measures of pluck and positivity, Little Orphan Annie charms everyone's hearts despite a next-to-nothing start in 1930's New York City.

Marguerite Modero, the troupe's director, said she sees Annie's positivity and resolution in the CAU members and the entire cast.

"This was our best production ever," she said after the production. "We have gone so far and come to such a high level of performance. Our members understand stage left, stage right. They critique their performance. We are raising their level of cognitive recognition of complex things. They feel they are ready for Broadway right now, and that's great."

Meela Sashi, 10, of Elizabeth, NJ played Annie

in the 100-member cast, about two thirds of which were members of CAU while the remaining cast hailed from communities both within and beyond Union County.

Andrew Barry, a CAU member, played a Hooverville resident and carpenter. He said he enjoyed being part of a cast with others from outside the agency.

"It's a lot of fun," said Andrew. "We sometimes go out together or have a party in the cafeteria. They're really nice to me. This is my first time performing with people who are not (from) CAU."

Kim Rosato, another CAU member who played a Hooverville resident, was a little nervous before the first show but quickly overcame her anxiety. She said she really enjoys performing.

"I become myself," she said. "It makes me feel good and gives me confidence in myself."

Ryan Durkan is a non-CAU member of the troupe who has performed in every CAU Community Players production. He played multiple roles in "Annie, Jr."

"I like the moments that not many people see," he said. "At the end of each performance we close the curtains and the audience doesn't see the smiles and emotion of the performers. It's a very emotional few seconds, very heartwarming, because we all did this work together and finished it together."

About Community Access Unlimited:

Community Access Unlimited (CAU), celebrating its 39th year in 2019, supports people with special needs in achieving real lives in the community. CAU provides support and gives voice to adults and youth who traditionally have little support and no voice in society, assisting its members with housing, life skills, employment, money management, socialization and civic activities. Serving more than 5,000 individuals and families, CAU also supports opportunities for advocacy through training in assertiveness, decision-making and civil rights. For more information about CAU and its services, contact us by phone at 908-354-3040, online at www.caunj.org or by mail at 80 West Grand Street, Elizabeth, NJ 07202.



(above) Cast members performing a song during the production of *Annie, Jr.*



(above) The full cast of *"Annie, Jr."*

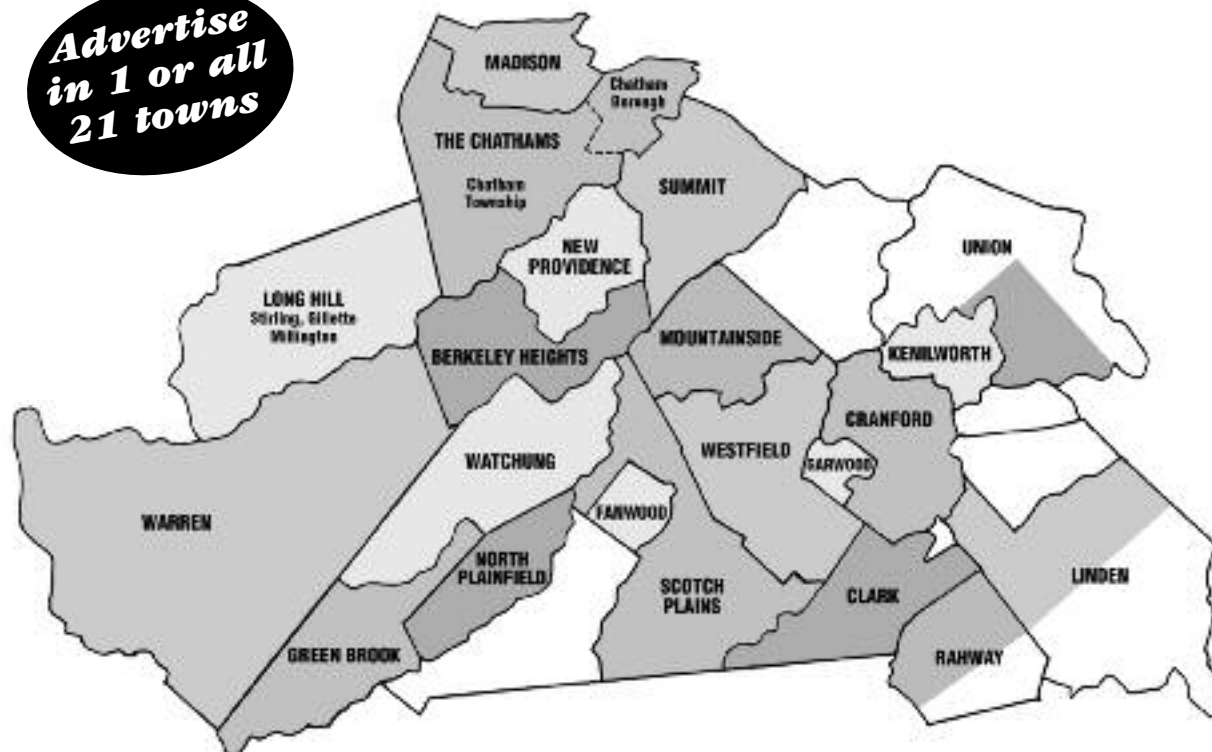
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