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VOLUNTEERS STEP UP FOR UNION COUNTY FOSTER YOUTH

More than two dozen volunteers from 10 Union County municipalities as well as towns in Bergen, Essex and Monmouth counties have been sworn in by Superior Court Judge Richard Wischusen to advocate for Union County youth removed from home due to abuse, neglect or abandonment and placed in foster homes or residential facilities.

After completion of training with Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Union County and taking their oath, the new CASA volunteers — or advocates — attended three hours of family court hearings to observe other CASA volunteers in action, and then were matched to their assigned foster youth or sibling set.

They are Shelley Grobe, Corey Sherlock and Susan Shaw of Cranford; Steve Polychronopoulos of Berkeley Heights; Dana Panavalli of Cliffside Park; Brittany Gonzalez and Flor Maria Mendez of Elizabeth; Janice Pettiford of Fanwood; Arlene Sumner of Linden; Adejoke Adedokun and Belinda McFarland of Newark; Louise Connelly of Roselle; Coleen Coffey and Margaret Van Heek of Scotch Plains; Laura Nanda of Spring Lake; Jim Moss and Meredith Nolen of Summit; James Ancharski, Karen Gorman, Su Huskey, Zoe Kimble, Suzanne LaForge and Michele Roosevelt of Westfield; Fernanda Olivo of West Orange and Diane Zinkowicz of Union.

The advocates range from age 23 to 74, and are parents, nonparents and grandparents; high school graduates to PhDs; full-time, part-time and retired professionals in such fields as education, law, medicine, nonprofit and business; and homemakers. Some had experience with foster care or adoption, as well as domestic violence or substance abuse within family or friends. Most, however, had no prior knowledge of the foster system.

CASA volunteers are extra eyes and ears for family law judges. With court-ordered access to foster parents, doctors, caseworkers, therapists and teachers, they incorporate findings into court reports and work to ensure each youth's needs are met and best interests protected. They are a

constant during chaos. There are approximately 500 Union County youth in foster care; more than 200 still await a CASA volunteer. Is that you? Reach Courtney at 908-293-8136 or cgreen@casaofunioncounty.org for details on the next training opportunity.



(above) Union County Superior Court Judge Richard Wischusen with the newest advocates for Union County's foster youth. There are approximately 500 Union County youth in foster care; more than 200 still await a CASA volunteer. Is that you? Reach Courtney at 908-293-8136 or cgreen@casaofunioncounty.org for details on the next training opportunity.



(above) Shelley Grobe of Cranford was sworn in to advocate for Union County youth in foster care.



(above) Susan Shaw of Cranford was sworn in to advocate for Union County youth in foster care.



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CRANFORD JAYCEE GOLF OUTING

The Cranford Jaycees are proud to announce their 13th Annual Golf Outing will be held on Friday, June 28, 2019 at the Ashbrook Golf Course located in Scotch Plains, New Jersey. Last year, the event raised \$8,000 and the proceeds generated were used to support the Union County Educational Services Commission's Work Readiness Academy for students with disabilities and the Cranford, NJ Baseball and Softball League. This year's golf outing will expressly benefit programs in our area for students with special needs. We have identified two very worthy organizations.

Our first beneficiary will be the Special Education services department at Cranford Public Schools which serves township students with disabilities and provides a continuum of programs and services in the least restrictive environment as recommended in each student's Individual Education Programs.

Our second beneficiary will again be the Union County Educational Services Commission (UCESC) which operates the Work Readiness Academy in Westfield, NJ that provides educational and vocational skills training programs for students (ages 16-21) throughout Union County with developmental disabilities including Autism Spectrum Disorders.

The event is \$140 per golfer, which includes cart, drinks, banquet afterwards, and course souvenir. Check in is at 12:00 p.m. 18 hole scramble format with a shotgun start at 1:00 p.m., including 3 challenge holes. Should anyone wish to participate as a foursome or afford any form of charitable contribution (via serving as a hole

sponsor, beverage cart sponsor, etc), please contact: golfouting@cranfordjaycees.org and it would be our great pleasure to include you, or your organization however possible. This is truly a splendid day of golf and laughter with the proceeds benefiting the special needs community. We look forward to seeing you on Friday, June 28.

The Cranford Jaycees are an all-volunteer, non-profit 501(c)3 organization that has had the pleasure of serving the Cranford community for over 50 years. Jaycees' sponsored fundraising events over the years have afforded opportunities to support efforts such as education, health and wellness, our local first responders, military veterans, youth and recreational activities, the arts, environmental conservation and preservation.



OUTING WILL BE HELD ON FRIDAY, JUNE 28, 2019 ASH BROOK GOLF COURSE, SCOTCH PLAINS, NJ

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For further information on this event please contact the Golf Outing Committee at golfouting@cranfordjaycees.org.

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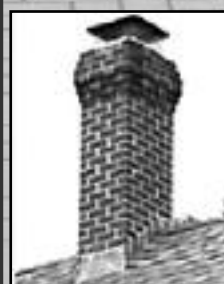
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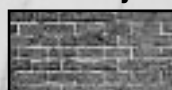
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MEMORIAL DAY PARADE MAY 27, 2019

In the spirit of the National Memorial Day Program, the Cranford Memorial Day Committee will hold its annual Memorial Day Parade on Monday, May 27, 2019. The parade will assemble at 8:30 a.m. at the Cranford Community Center, 220 Walnut Avenue, Cranford, New Jersey. Marching will start at 9 a.m. The parade will finish with services at approximately 10 a.m. at Memorial Park on Springfield Avenue. In case of inclement weather, services only will be held at the Community Center.


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THE JOY OF BACKYARD BIRD FEEDING

Please join the Hanson Park Conservancy on Tuesday, May 7, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. at the Cranford Community Center for the presentation, "The Joy of Backyard Bird Feeding." Pete Axelrod from Wild Birds Unlimited of Scotch Plains will discuss how attracting birds is a great way to bring us closer to nature while offering hours of enjoyment.

This program familiarizes participants with using bird feeders, water and shelter to attract native birds. In addition, we will learn about unique and interesting bird behavior. For example, the male Northern Cardinal feeds its mate in courtship. We will also learn how to discourage nuisance animals and how to make our properties bird-friendly. Birds add another dimension to the artistry of a garden with their striking colors, behaviors and allure of their songs!

Pete has been a nature enthusiast since the age of five. His passion led him to study Wildlife Biology and Natural History Interpretation. Pete has volunteered in avian population studies, wild bird rehabilitation, habitat restoration, wildlife education and birding ventures throughout New Jersey (with NJ Audubon, Friends of Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge and The Raptor Trust). He enjoys cycling, kayaking and hiking and always has his binoculars handy!

The Cranford Community Center is located at 220 Walnut Ave. in Cranford, NJ. The program is free and open to the public. No registration is required, but seating is available on a first-come, first-serve basis. This presentation is sponsored by the Hanson Park Conservancy.

To learn more, please visit our website, hansonparkconservancy.com or like us on Facebook.

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CRANFORD CLAY COURTS TENNIS CLUB ACCEPTING NEW MEMBERS FOR 2019 SEASON

The Cranford Clay Courts Club, located on Springfield Avenue in Cranford, is currently accepting new members for the 2019 Season.

The Club offers a long outdoor tennis season, with the courts usually open from April into December in recent years, depending upon weather conditions.

In addition, the club enjoys the distinction of being the only outdoor tennis club in the area with a lighting system for night play on the Club's well-maintained three har-tru (soft) courts.

The culture and communal aspect of the club offers members the somewhat unique opportunity to "find a game" without needing to bring a partner, particularly on weekday and weekend mornings. There are several social events throughout the season, Monday night open mixed doubles and clinics on Sunday afternoons at 4pm.

Membership in the Cranford Clay Courts Club is open to both resident and non-residents. For more information in joining or participating in Team Tennis, visit www.cranfordtennis.com.



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THE CELEBRATION SINGERS SPRING 2019 CONCERT: “GOIN’ HOME”

The Celebration Singers would like to invite you to our concert which will be held on May 31 and June 1, 2019 at 8 p.m. at Harvest Training Center located at 69 Myrtle Street, Cranford NJ, 07016. 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 invites the public to their concert, May 31 and June 1, 2019 at 8 p.m. at the Harvest Training Center in Cranford.



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MEET SP4 RAYMOND J. ASHNAULT U.S. ARMY, ONE OF CRANFORD'S 86

By Don Sweeney with research by Stu Rosenthal, proofreading by Vic Bary and Pat Pavlak

A group of young teenagers has gathered on a vacant lot adjacent to 3 Garden Place, the home of the Ashnault family. A sandlot baseball game was underway, a common sight in 1962. Paul Patterson remembers the friendly competition the kids enjoyed every weekend through most of their childhood. As fourteen-year-old Ray Ashnault approached the plate, all the outfielders backed up to the fence. Ray was a small kid, but he could wallop a baseball. Paul told us that Ray hit the ball over the fence nearly every time he went to bat. Sometimes he would hit the house in the distance and a couple times would hit and break a window. His other talents on the field were more than adequate, but it was with a bat in his hand that Ray was a master.

Cranford Chronicle articles from 1957 to 1960, that our researchers found tell of Ray's talents on the baseball diamond during the Little League all-star games and world series for the tri-county league. Reports of clutch hits to win games and long balls that cleared the bases tell the story of his glory days as a Little League slugger. One article made an observation that seemed to describe Ray Ashnault's life. "In the Pirate lineup Ray Ashnault handled the keystone position (second base). He was the smallest boy on the team but can cover a good deal of the ground."

You would think with talent like this he would have certainly been corralled by organized baseball at the next level and would have had an illustrious high school career. That was not his plan. Ray had a passion for cars and motorcycles and the motors that made them fast. His friends say Ray was a "motor head". While he continued to play in the sandlot and would enjoy a "good catch" with a friend occasionally, he could be found in the garage behind his home on Garden Place (called "the barn"). There he worked on his BSA motorcycle, that he rebuilt from scrap, or one of many old cars whenever time allowed. Motors were Ray Ashnault's passion. One story told to us by Fred Hayeck created a visual picture of his meticulous nature in his mechanical projects. Ray had an Oldsmobile from the early 50s that he was restoring. Fred remembers Ray wet sanding the hood for days and days, far past what would be considered necessary. When Fred questioned Ray as to why he kept sanding, Ray said it must be perfect. Fred continued to fill in the personal profile of Ray by telling me about Ray's other pastime of playing the drums and playing them hard. He noted that while Ray had a small frame, he was physically developed to a high degree through weight training. The pictures that we gathered bear that out.

Ray was born on April 17, 1948, attended St. Michael's School and later graduated from Cranford High School in the class of 1966. He put his mechanical abilities to work at Singer in Elizabeth, a leading American manufacturing company famous for its namesake sewing machines as well as government contract manufacturing for American war needs. He would only work there for a year, feeling the need to serve his country. The conflict in Vietnam was at its height. Ray told his mom that there was



(above) Ray, dressed in his football uniform, holding his little brother John. John was only 8 when Ray volunteered to serve.

work to be done there, and he wanted to be part of it. He enlisted in the army on June 24th, 1968 and was sent to Fort Benning, Georgia for his basic training and Fort McClellan, Alabama for advanced training and then sent to Fort Lewis in Tacoma Washington before he was transported by jet to Vietnam on December 2, 1968. We were lucky to be able to speak at length with Harold Hovater from his home in Muscle Shoals, Alabama. Harold travelled to Vietnam on the same plane with Ray and was paired with him for the next six months. His accounts of their brother-like relationship would give us the best understanding of the man that Ray Ashnault was.

Of the nearly 100 soldiers being delivered to Vietnam on that commercial airliner only Ray and Harold were selected to join Company A 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division (Air mobile). They were issued their gear at the Headquarters Company and were put on a helicopter and transported to their new unit in the battle theater. Alpha company was positioned on a peninsula on a rice paddy dike. The helicopter was unable to set down due to the soft ground, so it hovered about 12-15 feet above the rice paddy, where the men were ordered to jump with their 70 pounds of gear. Harold told of their landing as they plunged into mud that went to their waist as they watched their helicopter fade into the distance. It was quite the introduction to their new life in Vietnam for their scheduled one-year tour of duty for these two twenty-year-old young men.

Harold was picked for a machine gun squad which separated him and Ray for two weeks. Very quickly he recommended his friend and Ray was brought into his squad. A machine gun squad



(above) Ray Ashnault and his M-60 and bi-pod. One of his many medals was the Sharpshooters Badge on automatic rifle bar.

consisted of 5 men who carried two M-60 machine guns. This was a huge gun weighing 24 pounds (90 pounds with its ammo). Two men were designated to carry the guns and the other three men carried M-16 rifles, extra ammo or an M79 grenade launcher. Harold, a big guy, was selected to carry one of the M-60s and Ray Ashnault, the smallest man in the squad, volunteered to carry the other. Ray was a strong guy, but the thought of a man of 160 pounds, carrying a 90-pound machine gun setup and his own personal gear of another 70 pounds was quite a task in 100 to 110-degree heat. Harold said he handled it fine. The portraits we have of Ray in the battle field show the bandoleers of the 60-caliber ammunition draped around his neck. The M-60 was known as "The Pig" because it sounded like a grunting barnyard hog. It could fire up to 650 rounds per minute and was made famous in the movies as Rambo's weapon of choice.

I asked Harold if he could share any memories of Ray and the time that he spent with him. He told me of the regular arrivals of care packages from home his and Ray's family would send them every month. They seemed to always arrive two weeks apart. He and Ray would always open them together and shared them exclusively with each other. Except for once, when a package arrived that contained a banana nut birthday cake (an Ashnault family birthday tradition) along with candles, noisemakers and decorations sent by Ray's mom to help them celebrate his 21st birthday. For this package they let the whole squad join in (see picture). Harold went on to tell me that he didn't have a brother, but if he did, he

(continued on page 10)

RAYMOND J. ASHNAULT (continued)

would have hoped he'd be just like Ray. He said Ray treated everyone he met with the upmost respect, no matter who they were.

In my interview with Harold I was hoping to get first hand accounts of the episodes that led to the presentation of Ray's Bronze Star with a V device for Valor. I was told that Harold was with him in battle that day. I brought it up, hoping he would be able to talk about it. I didn't want to open a memory that was uncomfortable for him. By now I had learned that these memories are not easily talked about. So, I asked, "Harold, I heard you might have been with Ray the day that he earned the Bronze Star for Valor." He paused. "Yes" he said, "we both won a Bronze Star that day." "Would you be able to share the circumstances with me?" He said "yes I'll try". What followed was the most touching moment of all the interviews that I have conducted in the two years that I have been doing this.

Harold continued, "It was May 30th, 1968. Our commanding officer came in to speak to us. He said he wanted us to write home and tell our family and loved ones that we loved them and that they shouldn't worry about us. He went on to say that no matter what happens in the next few days he wanted us to know that he thought the world of us." Harold said that was very scary for them all. The next morning their platoon was to head out on a search and destroy mission. There was reportedly a Viet Cong supply depot that needed to be removed. Our research uncovered a military report that spoke of possible nerve gas from Communist China that was suspected to have been part of the supplies held there. It made us understand the importance of the mission to search and destroy this encampment which no American or South Vietnamese soldier had seen in four years or maybe ever.

On the morning of June 1st, Alpha Company was dropped in by Huey helicopters north of Xuan Loc, along The Dong Nai River in Long Khanh province. They discovered the described supply area. It contained tonnage of canned mackerel, rice and canned milk. It seemed that the compound had been deserted by the enemy. They also found several other buildings containing munitions and sampan boats. After some buildings and boats were demolished with C-4 explosives, it was decided much more C-4 would be needed as well as helicopters to move the mass quantity of provisions. They would set up camp by the nearby river and return in the morning. Harold and Ray's squad would be second to attempt the re-entry of the supply complex. As the first platoon approached the complex carrying C-4 explosives, they were attacked with rocket propelled grenades. Four men were hit including Ray and Harold's platoon leader, Sergeant Lyman Conrad Bach, who was killed. Two platoons, approximately 60 -80 Viet Cong, had returned to the depot overnight. Ray and Harold quickly set up their M-60 machine guns eight yards apart and started to cover the platoon with constant fire. Harold said that they kept glancing at each other throughout the

firefight. He said, "Ray was awesome, just doing what he was supposed to be doing." Alternately they covered each other with fire as the other went forward and pulled the wounded back to safety. The fierce fighting went on constantly for two days. The night of the 2nd the sounds of digging could be heard across enemy lines throughout the night. It seemed that they were digging in with defensive fox holes for an all-out assault in the morning. When morning came "a mad minute" of fire was ordered. There was no return fire. The enemy had moved out in the middle of the night and had crossed the river. The battle was over. It seems that the digging noises were the Viet Cong burying their dead. Harold said he thought that neither he nor Ray would make it through the battle alive. It was their first real battle and they thought it might be their last. In all, five members of Ray's unit were killed, and 3 members of a helicopter crew died when their Huey was shot down while they were assisting the beleaguered unit. Twenty-six soldiers were wounded. Five Bronze Stars with a V device for Valor were earned that day including Harold and Ray's. On June 3rd during the mopping up, a fresh grave of a Chinese soldier was found and a canister with Chinese lettering was uncovered, believed to be nerve gas.

In a letter home shortly after, Ray wrote "How's everything going? Fine, I hope? I figured by now you heard the news but in case you haven't, I was awarded a Bronze Star medal. Believe me, I was just doing my job the best I could. I'm no hero, but I'm proud of it, and I'm sure you'll both be just as proud as I am."

Three or four times while telling the accounts of the battle, Harold went silent as he regained his composure. I am not sure if he had told that story to many people before this interview. I followed with a question about Ray's lighter side of being a prankster to break the somber feeling that had taken us both over. I could tell he appreciated it.

Ray's family tells us that since Ray was a kid,

he got a kick out of making people laugh with his pranks. His mother tells a story about twelve-year-old Ray selling raffle tickets for five cents for a grand prize of a "Lincoln". After the entire family bought in, awaiting to see what he was up to. He drew a winning ticket and awarded a shiny Lincoln penny. Cranford High School legends tell of a time that Ray hooked up a New York radio station to the school PA system, blaring rock music to every classroom in the school. He was said by some to be a "cut up", always for a laugh and never causing damage or injury, just a harmless prankster. Harold's answer to my inquiry about any Army pranks was a good one. They had found an immature python in the "boonies". Ray thought it would be funny if he put it in the sergeant's tent. He was right, everyone thought it was hysterical and it provided a much-needed laugh. When the sergeant was surprised by the six-foot constrictor, he nearly jumped out of his skin as he ran screaming out of his tent. He said if he ever found who planted it there, he would have them court-martialed. He never found the culprit.

My questioning of Harold moved further into their brother-like relationship. I was hoping Harold would be able to continue with stories through to the end of Ray's life. That was not to happen. Harold was badly injured on June 19th, just two weeks after the battle that distinguished them both for their heroic actions. He was a victim of a traumatic brain injury. He remembers waking up in a hospital with bandages wrapped tightly around his head. He heard the door open and through the white gauze he could see Ray, who had travelled to see his buddy and make sure he was alright. Harold told Ray that they were sending him back home and that he wished he could stay there with him. It was the last time they saw each other. Harold was shipped to Walter Reed Medical Center in Washington, DC where he had surgery that took much of his memory for over 20 years. It was at a travelling mini Vietnam Wall display in Muscle Shoals that

(continued on page 12)



(above) Ray was the smallest, but most athletically gifted player on The Pirates in the 1959 Cranford Little League World Series. He handled the clean-up position as well as giving a commanding performance as pitcher and second baseman. Ray is mentioned in Chronicle baseball articles from 1957 through 1961.

RAYMOND J. ASHNAULT (continued)

he asked if Ray Ashnault was on the wall. When he saw his name, he broke down and cried. It was the first he heard of Ray's death.

In the months that followed we know that Ray was injured, receiving a Purple Heart. He was hospitalized, treated and released, anxious to rejoin his unit. We are awaiting additional military records to complete this story. Check Cranford86.org for updates.

On August 19th of 1969 Ray was at the base Headquarters, 3rd Brigade, U.S. 1st Cavalry Division near Quan Loi in Binh Long Province. At 1:33 AM, the base received a ground attack from an unknown sized enemy force using small arms and automatic weapons. The troopers fired back and were supported by artillery, helicopter gunships and tanks from the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment located at the camp. At 2:00 AM, the enemy withdrew, their losses were unknown. During the action, a tragic accident occurred in which a Sheridan tank accidentally fired on an American bunker near the northwest perimeter of the base. Nine troopers were killed and another five wounded. Sadly, and shockingly, after such a courageous tour of duty, Ray Ashnault was among those nine.

In recognition of his entire tour in Vietnam, Ray received additional awards for meritorious service. These included a second Bronze Star and the Air Medal for participation in more than 25 aerial missions over hostile territory in which "his determination to accomplish his mission in spite of inherent hazards, his outstanding degree of professionalism and devotion to duty has brought credit to himself, his organization and the military service". (text directly from the letter that accompanied his medals). See Cranford86.org for more about his medals.

Back at home Ray was given a funeral with full military honors. His neighbors Fred Hayeck and Carol Hayeck Brown told us of the military guards who stood at the head and foot of Ray at the funeral home. Every fifteen minutes there was an impressive changing of the guard ceremony. Then at the gravesite a 21-gun salute by an honor guard sent from Fort Monmouth concluded the ceremony, one they would never forget.

Interviews of neighbors and friends of Ray were helpful in letting me get to know the person behind the engraved name on our town's monument. Fred Hayeck and Carol Hayeck Brown, sandlot player Paul Patterson and comrade Harold Hovater all told me of their attachment to Ray and their incredible feeling of loss when they heard of his passing. They shared with me the deep emotion that gripped everyone who knew Ray and the Ashnault family. During the interviews many tears were still being shed, even though fifty years have passed. It reminded me that, while we often speak of the soldier who paid the ultimate price for freedom, what sometimes is missed is the high price for freedom that is paid by all who loved our heroes.

One of the loved ones left behind was Ray's younger brother John. He was only eight when Ray went off to war. While he has limited memories of times spent with Ray, ones that he

treasures are the rides that he and Ray shared on the classic BSA motorcycle. John's love of working on motors and riding motorcycles has kept Ray's memories alive for him. He wrote some touching memories for us in lieu of an emotionally difficult interview. We have printed them in their entirety at Cranford86.org. His closing line wrapped up our story of Ray Ashnault best. "I know in my heart that there are many servicemen who made it home because of my brother's courageous actions in battle."

Raymond J. Ashnault lived his entire life as a bigger man than that small frame that he had been endowed with should have allowed. He was a great American patriot and one of our Cranford 86.

The story of Ray Ashnault was previously told briefly as our first Cranford 86 article, sharing space with Joseph Minnock. While the first stories told by our project were done with total respect to the memories of our town's heroes, they were done without much research. With the skills that we now have, our articles have become much more detailed and fact filled. Our committee therefore decided to revisit the life stories of both Joseph Minnock and Raymond Ashnault. We feel now that we have represented their service to our country more completely. It was our pleasure to do so.

Visit Cranford86.org for more photos and links to our research sources as well as YouTube links to interesting articles and videos. For information about our project or to comment on this article we welcome your inquiries. Email us at info@Cranford86.org or (908) 272-0876. Find us on Facebook at Cranford86.



(above) The Burmese Python was a common species in Vietnam. Ray was famous for a prank in which he hid one in his sergeant's tent.



(above) Ray with Harold Hovater from Muscle Shoals, Alabama. Both were 20 years old when they served together for six months in Vietnam.

Our interview with Harold helped us understand the man behind the engraved name on our monument.



(above) A Band of Brothers in Vietnam, Harold Hovater and Ray Ashnault (3rd and 4th from left) with two unidentified comrades deal with the daily heat of 110 degrees.



(above) Harold Hovater described Ray Ashnault's physique as 160 pounds and all muscle. Posing here with the Vietnam Cavalry's horse, the UH-1 Helicopter (the "Huey"), in the background.

MEMORIAL DAY PARADE COMMITTEE ENCOURAGES ALL TO FOLLOW THE PARADE TO THE CEREMONY AND BRING A NEIGHBOR

By Don Sweeney Memorial Day Parade committee and Cranford 86 project member

As a member of The Cranford Memorial Parade Committee and the founding member of The Cranford 86 Project, I am again writing this invitation and heartfelt request that you and your family consider spending Memorial Day morning with us at our Memorial Park on Springfield Avenue as we pay some moments of respect to the 86 men whose names are engraved on the three tablets there. The tablets stand there all year, most time unnoticed as we all rush by on our way about our daily business. If it weren't for those men's supreme sacrifice, the language that we speak and the daily chores that we take for granted could be altogether different.

Through the efforts of our committees' campaigns to "follow the parade to the ceremony," the number of townspeople in attendance in the past years have been incredibly improved. Last year's crowded lawn at the park for the solemn ceremony told us that our requests were being heard. Our research of past Memorial Day ceremonies tells us that in 1945, during World War II when our town buried 57 sons of Cranford over a four-year period, the crowds numbered over five thousand. Every street surrounding the park was covered with townspeople there to pay their respects.

The recent upswing in attendance, we are thinking, partly may be in response to the new awareness that our Cranford 86 profiles have created of the faces and life stories of our hometown heroes. Last year for the first time, in addition to our usual respectful program, we told the stories of the first twelve heroes who have been featured in The Cranford Monthly. After the ceremony, we made available the spiral bound booklet that contained those articles and pictures. We are happy to say that they disappeared quickly. Our goal of letting the townspeople know the men behind the engraved names on the monuments is slowly being accomplished. This year we plan to continue with the dedication of banners bearing the images of nine more Cranford Hometown Heroes as well as volume 2 of our ongoing book series.

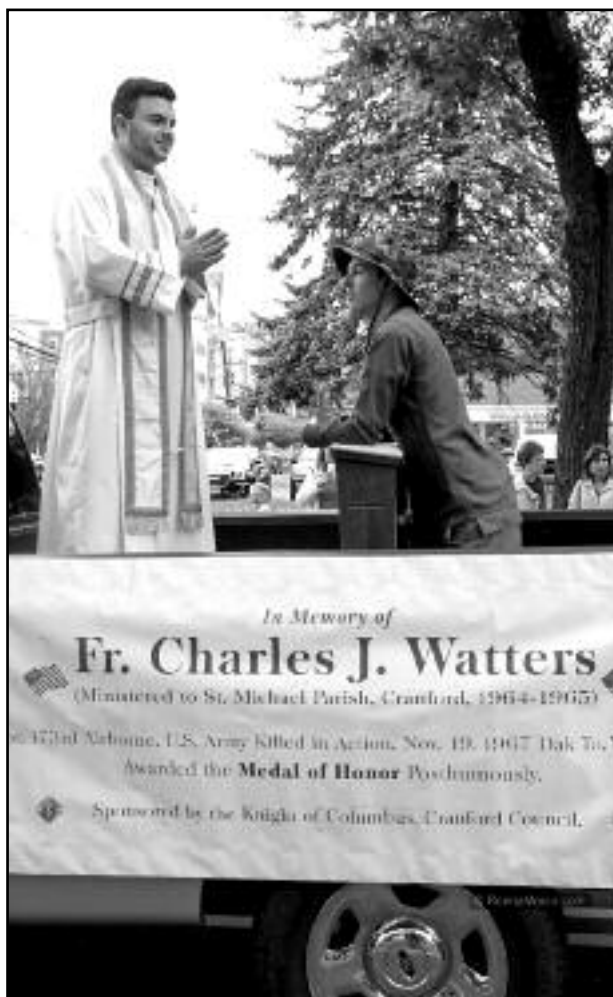
We hope you will consider making plans for your family to attend this event which makes Cranford so special. If it will be your first time, I assure you that you will leave with a good feeling as you walk home. If you are one of our regular attendees, we ask that this year you invite a couple of families from your neighborhood to join you. My wife Joanne has lived in our neighborhood for her entire life, except for a few years after college. As a kid, her family never missed the Memorial Day festivities, and always watched the parade as a neighborhood unit on the corner of South and Walnut Avenues. This year you will still find her at that same corner surrounded by our new neighbors as well as many of the old neighbors who return to Cranford just to relive those special moments of years gone by.

The parade commences from The Cranford Community Center at 220 Walnut Avenue at 9:00 am and travels through town ending at Memorial Park at 335 Springfield Avenue. The ceremony starts immediately afterward and lasts about an hour. It's a beautiful morning.

Every year a couple new people join every neighborhood. New residents need to know

what they have become a part of by coming to Cranford. They probably don't know about the little Norman Rockwell scene that happens every year downtown on Memorial Day. Why not start your own neighborhood tradition and get them all out to the parade? Then "follow the parade to the ceremony."

We'll see you there.



(above) Cranford Knights of Columbus' yearly float honoring Father Charles Waters who was awarded The Medal of Honor posthumously for heroic conduct in The Vietnam War on November 19th, 1967.



(above) 2018 Grand Marshal James Silkenen greets the crowd and tells of his tour in Vietnam where he served with the Army Postal Service. A humble member of VFW post #335, he told of the many silent support troops that made the war effort bearable for the thousands of American men and woman serving in Vietnam. He told of the most precious delivery that was made during his service. A birthday cake that had travelled from Oregon and reached its battlefield destination in perfect condition.



War time heroes of days gone by from Cranford VFW Post #335. (above, l-r) Joseph Delgrippe, Korean War; Daniel Sullivan, World War 2; Peter Klein, World War 2; and Arthur Snyder, Korean War.

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IRISHMAN OF THE YEAR HONORED BY KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

Submitted by John J. Doolan

At the 2019 Annual Council St. Patrick's Day Dance, the Cranford Knights of Columbus honored Rich Donovan of the Cranford Youth Ministry Group as Irishman of the Year and honored Detective Steve D'Ambola and Firefighter Tom Hannen for their dedicated service to the Cranford Community.

The Council would like to thank the Dance Committee chaired by Brother Rich Pierce for a great event.

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, statewide 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 Jim Vari or our Membership Chair John Caprio at 732-306-5634 or visit cranfordknights.org.



(above) Detective D'Ambola and Firefighter Hannen with their Chiefs Ryan Greco and Daniel Czeh after receiving their awards.



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“RE-LEI FOR A CURE” AT CRANFORD’S 12TH ANNUAL RELAY FOR LIFE

Submitted by Linda Miklencic

Cranford’s 12th Annual Relay for Life will take place on May 17, 2019 at Hillside Avenue School. This year the committee has decided on a Hawaiian theme and we will Re-Lei for a Cure for 12 hours.

Our event is made up of three components: CELEBRATE, REMEMBER, FIGHT BACK.

The Opening ceremony CELEBRATING our survivors will start at 7 p.m. with a local survivor sharing her own personal story. All the survivors’ names will be announced before they will lead us in the first lap. Their faithful caregivers join in

the second lap and then all teams start relaying.

The most emotionally moving time during Relay is the luminaria ceremony at 10 p.m., when we REMEMBER our loved ones lost to cancer. Luminaria bags will be distributed to all elementary and middle school students before the event, are available for purchase online and will be personally decorated by our participants. We line the track with the bags and light them up to illuminate the track at nightfall. Unfortunately, we all know someone who has lost their life to cancer. We take this time to slow down for a moment to reflect on the lives of those who did



not win the battle.

Our fundraising efforts and the dedication Cranford has to this unique event is our way to FIGHT BACK and have hope that we will see a world where cancer is completely eliminated. Relay for Life fundraising efforts support The American Cancer Society’s lifesaving research, advocacy and local patient services.

Each and every member of the community is invited to join us. Walkers can spend as little or as much time on the track as they wish. A minute of your time can make a huge difference in the fight against cancer.

For more information, call Linda Miklencic 908-497-0283 and to register visit relayforlife.org/cranfordnj.



(above) The 12th Annual Relay for Life 2019 event leadership team.

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POLICE SUBSTATIONS OPEN IN THREE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Cranford Police Department and Cranford Public Schools announced the creation of school "Police Substations" within its 3 largest schools in an ongoing effort to increase school safety, security and law enforcement visibility. This effort complements the district's recent additions to safety and security infrastructure throughout the township's public schools.

Currently, both organizations have a shared services agreement in which the schools contribute funding to the township in exchange for services from the Police Department's Juvenile Bureau and School Resource Officer Program. Cranford High School, Hillside Avenue School and Orange Avenue School now have designated offices to be used by the School

Resource Officers and members of the Patrol Division on a daily basis. "The purpose of a police substation is to increase police visibility while offering officers another place to complete reports, make follow-up calls, and conduct school business," said Cranford Police Chief Ryan Greco. The Police Department already has a healthy relationship with Principals, faculty and students, but the substations have increased that bond. "Our officers participate in classroom lessons, offer feedback on mandated school drills, and interact with teachers on a daily basis," Chief Greco continued. "The consistent presence in schools afforded by these designated spaces foster communication and a healthy working relationship."

The Cranford Public Schools' in-house building, grounds and custodial personnel created these spaces swiftly since the idea first

came forward in November of 2018. Additionally, The Home Depot of Garwood, led by Store Manager Gino Temporal, provided construction supplies, paint and carpeting to aid in the project's successful completion. Laptop computers that may be used by officers to complete reports and follow-up investigations were supplied by generous donors. According to Dr. Scott Rubin, Cranford Superintendent of Schools, "This is yet another fine example of the community coming together for the benefit of our children. The District is very proud and appreciative of its strong partnership with the Cranford Police Department and thanks all involved in helping to make this important initiative a reality."

The Cranford Police Department and Cranford Public Schools have had a shared services agreement since 2014.



CRANFORD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE EVENTS

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UPCOMING EVENTS - MAY 2019

Night Networking
May 7th - Tuesday - 5:30-7:30 PM
Bar Americana - Outside Patio
24 North Avenue E.
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Appetizers/Cash Bar
Member \$15/Non-Member \$20
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or Call 908 272 6114

Food Truckfest - Featuring Five Food Trucks
May 14th - Tuesday - 11:30-2:00 PM
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For additional info: Call 908 272 6114

The Cranford Area Chamber of Commerce unites and energizes the business community to improve members' success by providing networking, educational opportunities, encouraging business and community development.



(above, l-r) D/Sgt. Matthew R. Nazzaro; Gino Temporal of The Home Depot; Dr. Scott Rubin, Superintendent of Schools; Chief Ryan J. Greco, Chief of Police; Dr. Curt Fogas, School Safety Specialist and Hillside School Principal; Dr. Marc Edery, Principal of Orange Avenue School; and D/Lt. Edward Davenport.

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LETTER CARRIERS' STAMP OUT HUNGER FOOD DRIVE – MAY 11

The 27th annual Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger® Food Drive is on Saturday, May 11, 2019.

The Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger® Food Drive is happening on Saturday, May 11, 2019. 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.

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UNION COUNTY INTERFAITH YOUTH COUNCIL

After the horror of the Christchurch massacre in New Zealand, groups of young people and adults from the Muslim Community Center of Union County, Temple Shalom of Scotch Plains, First United Methodist Church of Scotch Plains, First Presbyterian Church of Cranford, First Presbyterian Church of Woodbridge, amongst others, pressed forward by gathering at the Fanwood Presbyterian Church for pizza, prayer, consolation and growing in friendship over board games. The event was held on March 17, 2019. All participants signed a banner of consolation made by the Muslim Community Center of Union County Sunday School children, which was sent to Al Noor Mosque and the Linwood Islamic Center in Christchurch.

The group's next event will be a park cleanup held in June. Follow 'Union County Interfaith Youth Council' on Facebook for details on upcoming events and how you can participate.

We urge everyone to get the word out about this important formation of Union County youth in furthering the common values of peace, goodness, truth, justice and mercy held by all major faith traditions.



(above) The Interfaith Youth Council of Union County met in March for a night of pizza, prayer, consolation and growing in friendship over board games. Follow 'Union County Interfaith Youth Council' on Facebook for details on upcoming events.



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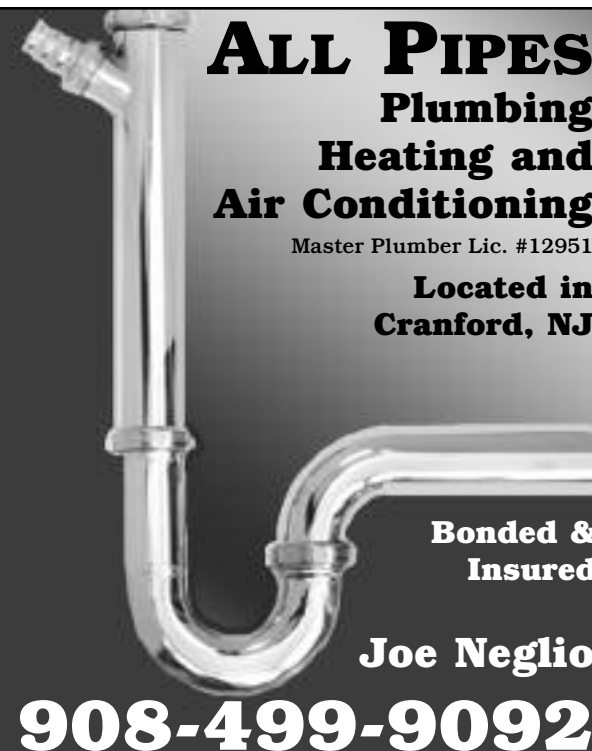
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POLICE DEPARTMENT TO BECOME C.L.E.A.R. PROGRAM LOCATION

Submitted by Detective Lieutenant Edward R. Davenport

Chief Ryan J. Greco announced that as of February 1, 2019, the Cranford Police Department will take part in Union County's Community Law Enforcement Addiction Recovery (C.L.E.A.R.) Program as a local C.L.E.A.R. Program Location. The C.L.E.A.R. Program is a partnership between the County of Union and Prevention Links in which law enforcement agencies provide on-site drug addiction recovery services to Union County residents seeking assistance.

Since June of 2017, the Union County Sheriff's Office in Elizabeth and Union County Police Department in Westfield have been the two locations where services could be found. Since its inception, the C.L.E.A.R. Program has assisted 72 individuals towards recovery. In strategizing on how best to address the grave consequences of substance use disorder, Chief Ryan Greco welcomed the opportunity to have his department participate in a program that provides another avenue to combat the opioid

problem in Union County.

In 2018, the Cranford Police Department responded to 17 opiate overdose calls for service. Three of those calls resulted in fatalities. "It is clear that law enforcement cannot arrest its way out of the problem of substance abuse. Medications such as Naloxone are incredibly useful but are at best a band-aid in a time of emergency. To truly tackle this problem, those individuals facing the disease of addiction need to find their way to recovery," Greco said. Chief Greco believes that the innovative approach of partnering his organization's officers with Prevention Links and High Focus Centers makes perfect sense. "I can only hope that by providing an additional C.L.E.A.R. Program location and expanding the program hours we will be able to assist even more people towards recovery."

Coordinated by Captain Guy Patterson, twelve Cranford Police Officers have received advanced substance abuse training and will serve as facilitators for participants. C.L.E.A.R. Program

participants seeking treatment will be met by one of the department's specially trained officers who will assist the individual and pair them with a partner agency recovery coach. A recovery coach serves as the individual's guide to appropriate treatment facilities and recovery support networks. C.L.E.A.R. provides services at any of the program locations Monday through Friday between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. In addition to the regular business hours, the Cranford Police Department has created a partnership with local stakeholders at High Focus Centers to provide after-hours recovery coaching services. Collectively, these partnerships allow for the Cranford Police Department to offer substance abuse recovery assistance services 24 hours a day seven days a week.

Anyone seeking substance abuse assistance is encouraged to come to the Cranford Police Department.

For additional information, please contact Captain Patterson at 908-709-3991.



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NEW JERSEY MAKERS DAY AT LIBRARY

Cranford Public Library's annual Makers Day program was held recently. NJ Makers Day, a statewide event, celebrates, promotes, and may even introduce maker culture, as well as the

values associated with making, tinkering and STEM-based learning. This year, participants made paper, constructed paper crafts, tested paper airplanes, and created their own pinback buttons.



(above) Librarian Sherry Lange and volunteer Priscilla Lawrence assist Jayden in paper making.

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NJ SHARING NETWORK REPORTS 678 LIFE-SAVING TRANSPLANTS IN 2018

NJ Sharing Network, the non-profit, federally designated organ procurement organization responsible for the recovery of organs and tissue in the state, has released statistics regarding donation in New Jersey during 2018. Last year, a total of 678 life-saving transplants were made possible, 537 from deceased donors and an additional 141 from living donors.

More hearts (79) were transplanted than ever before, representing an 18 percent increase over 2017. Additionally, an unprecedented number of eye donors (826) gave the gift of sight, a nine percent increase from the prior year.

These record-breaking numbers are against the backdrop of significant growth in organ transplantation in New Jersey, which has increased 35 percent over the last six years. In fact, 2018 marks the fourth year of over 500 organs transplanted in the state. Over that same timeframe, heart donation saw an enormous increase of 132 percent.

Transplants saw an upswing nationally, as well, with over 36,500 organ transplants

performed in 2018. This sets an annual record for the sixth straight year, according to preliminary data from United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS).

Vernell Williams of Paterson, NJ, says that he is eternally grateful to a man named Victor Startek of Toms River, NJ, who passed away at age 27 and donated his heart and kidney. Startek had registered as an organ donor when he first got his New Jersey driver's license. His mother, Deborah Martinez, and twin sister, Ashley Startek, said that knowing Victor had already made the decision was an enormous relief for them. Williams, 50, who suffered from congestive heart failure, had waited months to receive a heart transplant and had nearly given up hope.

"The months that I spent in the hospital waiting for a new heart were the most challenging of my life. I'm an optimistic person, but I'd begun to think I was facing the end. That's when I got the call – and Victor literally saved my life."

Like Victor, nearly 40 percent of those who gave the gift of life in 2018 previously registered as an organ donor and made their wishes known to family and friends, and this number continues to grow.

"The increased percentage of donors who were previously registered speaks to the incredible job that our entire staff does to educate and inform the community about the life-saving benefits of organ and tissue donation," said Joe Roth, President and CEO of NJ Sharing Network.

Today, there are nearly 4,000 New Jersey residents awaiting a life-saving transplant. Every day, approximately three people are added to the New Jersey waiting list, and one person dies every three days while waiting for a transplant. One organ donor can save eight lives and one tissue donor can restore health to over 75 people.

New Jersey residents can help save lives by registering as organ and tissue donors, having a conversation with family and friends and getting involved at NJSharingNetwork.org.

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NJ MILES WITH MOMS 5K AND 1 MILE RUN/WALK SCHEDULED FOR MAY 5

Registration is now open for the eighth annual 5K and one mile fundraiser, NJ Miles with Moms, benefiting the Mothers' Center of Central New Jersey (MCCNJ), a non-profit organization that seeks to support moms. This family event will be held at Oak Ridge Park in Clark, NJ, on May 5, 2019 at 9 am, and will feature raffles, a DJ, refreshments and kids activities, including a free Kids Fun Run.

The 5k will be chip-timed and awards will be given in the following five categories: top male adult/teen, top female adult/teen, top 5K child, top adult pushing a child, and top MCCNJ member/alumni. A participation award will be given to all registered participants of the Fun

Run.

Early Bird registration rates will be available through April 16, 2019. For complete information and to sign up for the event, visit: <https://raceroster.com/events/2019/22225/miles-with-moms-5k>.

About The Mothers' Center of Central NJ

The Mothers' Center of Central NJ is a non-profit organization committed to building and fostering a community of support and empowerment for all mothers. Established in 1978, MCCNJ offers opportunities for local moms to connect through daytime and evening activities, focused on peer support and education.

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WESTFIELD • 4 BEDROOMS • 2 BATHROOMS • \$725,000

This 1870 Westfield stunner combines all the architectural details you love in a period home with the updates 21st century life demands. Featuring 4 ample bedrooms, 2 beautifully remodeled baths, a stunning kitchen renovation with timeless white cabinetry, center island, granite counter-tops and a charming wood burning stove with brick surround. Porches, decks and patios offer access to a wonderful landscape with plenty of room for outdoor fun. It's all located just steps from trains, shops, and restaurants in the vibrant heart of downtown Westfield. Truly, a special home!



QUESTIONS?

I AM HAPPY TO DISCUSS THIS HOME OR ANY OF YOUR REAL ESTATE NEEDS.

**137 ELMER ST
WESTFIELD, NJ 07090**

CALL TODAY. I AM HERE TO HELP!

Carol McLaughlin

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Each office is independently owned & operated.

Cranford Real Estate Agent. Cranford Resident.



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MICHELLE PAIS GROUP

#1 Real Estate Team
in Union County
Specializing in Cranford

AS PER TOTAL SALES VOLUME (GMLS FROM 1/1/18 - 12/31/18)

CRANFORD'S APRIL REAL ESTATE MARKETING REPORT*



65

Homes Currently
on the Market



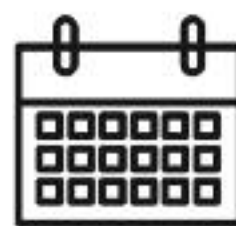
56

Homes Listed



22

Homes Sold in
the Last 30 Days



38

Average Days
on Market

AVERAGE:

List Price \$553,337
Sale Price \$489,000

Sale Price/List Price:

89.4%

MP

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*Data provided is as per the Garden State
MLS between 3/15/19-4/15/19

If your home is currently listed with another real estate broker, please disregard this advertisement. It is not our intention to solicit the offerings of other real estate brokers.